

# **The Depoliticisation of Deprivation: Food Insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand**

By

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## Abstract

Empirical research into the nature of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand and other rich liberal democracies leaves little room for dispute: this has emerged as a hugely significant problem over the last 35 years. This thesis examines how we *think* about food insecurity as a problem in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is significant because the particular way that a problem is thought about or constructed has strong implications for both the real and imagined possibilities for action oriented to its resolution. I ask ‘how does food insecurity come to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?’ to enable an investigation involving several approaches.

I summarise empirical research concerned with food insecurity in rich liberal democracies and Aotearoa New Zealand specifically. I observe that regularities in data concerning who suffers food insecurity in rich liberal democracies indicates a structural influence and argue that the relevant structures are those of the neoliberal political economy in this country, instituted following the ‘neoliberal turn’ of the 1980s. I extend this structural theorisation of the significance of the neoliberal turn to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand by suggesting that the social-political context of Aotearoa New Zealand, constituted in citizen subjectivities, is influenced by the same neoliberal political rationality. Specifically, I suggest that food insecurity is constructed as a depoliticised issue, an aspect of the wider depoliticisation of deprivation produced by neoliberal governmentality. Positioning the operation of the neoliberal political economy as supported by a particular social-political situation is one explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I execute a small-scale investigation of this theorisation using Q methodology to examine the subject positions of people professionally familiar with food insecurity – academic researchers, charity responders and policy makers. Findings include that most subjectivities in this group do not align with the theorised neoliberal citizen subjectivity and that some are amenable to elements of it. This highlights the complexity of both subjectivities and neoliberal influence on them. The findings prompt an elaboration of the concept of depoliticisation as a useful theoretical tool.

“No More Throw-away People” – *Edgar S. Cahn*

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To *all* those who have chatted, leant an ear, commented, discussed, raised eyebrows, read, read, read, cajoled and supported; who graciously gave their time and attention to this thesis: my name is on the front, but you are present all the way through. Ngā mihi maioha.

He aha te mea nui o te ao.

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

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# Chapter 1 – Introduction

“We should be cross about this; all of us”.

- *Britain Isn't Eating* (2014), a *Guardian* and Royal Court microplay

This thesis examines how we *think* about food insecurity as a problem in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is an under-recognised feature of discussions about food insecurity, which tend to centre on policy discussion, political frameworks or structural political economy. Much public discussion, on those occasions that ‘hunger’ is addressed, lacks both compassion and an empirical base, and heavily features poorly informed opinion.

Empirical research into the nature of food insecurity in this country and other rich liberal democracies leaves little room for dispute: this has emerged as a hugely significant problem over the last 35 years, one that compels us to consider how to take effective action. Examining how food insecurity is *thought* about can usefully inform this consideration, encouraging a wider scope of analysis as well as a more nuanced understanding of the precise social context in which the empirically apparent ‘problem’ of food insecurity exists in our society. The particular way that a problem is thought about or constructed has strong implications for both the real and imagined possibilities for action oriented to its resolution.

To investigate, I build on previous empirical research with a two-part theorisation about how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. Prior to theoretical interrogation, articulation of the nature of this ‘coming to be’ is premature. The first theorisation is concerned with the way that the neoliberal political economy produces and structures food insecurity in this country. The second theorisation is concerned with how food insecurity is understood as a problem – by citizens and in policy practice – in Aotearoa New Zealand. I execute a small-scale investigation of this theorisation using Q methodology.

## 1.1 Research Question

The focus of this thesis is motivated by twin concerns: about the documented rise in the level of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, and about the perturbing lack of public concern that this has aroused. Aotearoa New Zealand is an economically developed country, a rich liberal

democracy, and a food-secure country with world-renowned production landscapes. There is no shortage of food for Kiwis<sup>1</sup> in their country; but there does seem to be a lack of public and political will to ensure that this means that Kiwis are not short of food.

Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand has a negative impact on all citizens. It is detrimental to society<sup>2</sup>, financially costly, and subjects people who suffer hunger, a severe outcome of food insecurity, to a perhaps uniquely intimate form of violence. The ongoing failure to address food insecurity effectively in this country is just that: a failure. From this perspective, the distance between empirical evidence about food insecurity and the way that food insecurity, hunger and deprivation are talked and thought (and not thought) about is of great interest. The fact that such discursive limitation informs the way that responses are, and can be, formed makes this gap significant and thus worthy of the following thesis-length examination.

While it is tempting to think that the (lack of a) response to food insecurity in this country is rooted in ignorance of the issue, this does not account for the persistence of inaction despite periodic and fairly well publicised reports focussed on poverty, hardship and deprivation<sup>3</sup>. The key argument in this thesis will be to frame this gap through the concept of depoliticisation. This is the theoretical destination of the key research question of the thesis: *why don't we care about food insecurity?*

In order to situate and respond to this research question, the research process in this thesis is broad. There is a need to review a range of aspects of food insecurity: empirical and theoretical dimensions; its causes and consequences; how it is perceived and problematised; and its situation within social, political and political economic contexts. Therefore, the chapters in this thesis seek to explain how food insecurity comes to be manifested, constituted, legitimated, reproduced, contested, transformed, and so on, in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a shorthand for this, the question which the chapters in this thesis attempt to answer, is:

**How does food insecurity come to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> For support for this idea, see *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis* (Rashbrooke 2013a) and *The Spirit Level* (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009)

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, The Salvation Army's annual *State of the Nation Reports* (e.g. Johnson 2014, 2015), work published by the Child Poverty Action Group (e.g. Dale, O'Brien, and St John 2014) and the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012), and the Annual Child Poverty Monitor (JR McKenzie Trust 2015).

## **1.2 Context: The Political Nature of Food Insecurity**

Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is not a historical novelty, and there are distinct political trends shaping how the need for food is/has been responded to. McPherson (2006) notes the eclipse of the historically major role of charitable responses to a need for food by the welfare state after, the Second World War. In this historical context, food insecurity was unquestionably the business of the state and required state intervention. A dramatic change in the material assistance provided by the state, as well as in the perceived role of the state in delivering welfare assistance, accompanied the re-emergence of food insecurity – which coincided with the ‘neoliberal turn’ of the mid-1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Importantly, the policy changes of the 1980s were, or have become, more than a cost-saving exercise or means to deal with a particular crisis. There has been a far wider “shift in attitudes” and a decline in support for egalitarian values amongst the population of Aotearoa New Zealand, reflected in the growth of inequality in this country (Boston 2014, 976). What Jessop (2014) calls ‘self-responsibilisation’ is clearly visible: deprivation is widely perceived as a function of deviance on the part of the deprived – laziness, vice, poor decisions. Welfare recipients in Aotearoa New Zealand have come to be widely identified as ‘bludgers’, non- or anti-citizens (Hackell 2007). Those lacking education, opportunities or sufficient nutritious food are generally seen as deserving of their deprivation, assumed to be at fault if not actively to blame. Thought of in this way, deprivation is irremediable by anyone but the victims themselves.

This thesis critiques these neoliberal ideas, arguing that they are informed by ideology in the face of empirical evidence; indeed, that they are supported only by ideology, despite empirical evidence. Strong support for this critique can be demonstrated in an illustrative case: the jump in the number of food parcels distributed by the Salvation Army in Aotearoa New Zealand from 2,124 in 1991 to 10,261 in 1992, following the 1991 Budget which heavily cut government spending on welfare (Uttley 1997). The change in the number of food parcels was not due to a sudden increase in the number of people in Aotearoa New Zealand who were lazy, feckless, or inhibited by other personal faults.

Nor was it driven, as Lord Freud, a British Tory MP, suggested of similarly rising figures of food bank use more recently, by food banks becoming more visible and having more people take advantage of their charitable offerings (Butler 2014). This is not to say that individuals’

alcoholism, drug use or gambling habits were not a factor in *any* of the 2,124 food parcels distributed in 1991. These are social problems that need attention in themselves; but they are not the major drivers of food insecurity or deprivation more generally in Aotearoa New Zealand (Boston 2014). It is disingenuous as well as unjust to blame the victims of circumstance for their predicament.

The self-responsibilisation of deprivation obfuscates the strong link between the deteriorating situation of the poorest groups in society – and the expansion of the size of these groups over time – and particular government policies, including welfare policy. Riches (1986, 102) argues that, given the social and economic dislocation wrought by structural forces, “[w]hat matters is how the state responds”. Investigating the notion of school lunch programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand, Anscombe (2009, 38-9) found that governments have consistently “sidestepped” food insecurity as an issue, despite making calls for action while in Opposition<sup>4</sup>.

In 2013, the Salvation Army, a major charitable institution, gifted 56,707 food parcels to 28,913 clients (The Salvation Army 2013). The charity KidsCan stated in 2015 that it provides food in schools to support the education of 12,500 hungry children (KidsCan n.d.). An OECD study found that the proportion of the population in this country which suffered food insecurity “increased substantially” from 10.3 percent to 17.2 percent from 2007 to 2010 (OECD 2014, 1). This study also found that, in the same period, “relative poverty” decreased from 11.0 percent to 10.3 percent and wages rose across both “Average” and “Bottom 10%” of earners (OECD 2014, 3). This combination of trends indicates that secure access to food is not being eased by economic recovery following the Global Financial Crisis.

What this section shows is that food insecurity is not an abstract or technical problem. It is a problem that is grounded in politics, values and political dynamics – what I will address as a social-political context. For this reason, I approach food insecurity as existing within, and reflecting, power relations and governance regimes. A key aspect of this approach is the characterisation of food insecurity as an aspect of the wider depoliticisation of deprivation.

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<sup>4</sup> See also the Hon. Anne Tolley’s (2008) press release *Labour says child hunger is about ‘dieting’*.



### 1.3 Thesis Structure

Across the chapters in this thesis, I will take the opportunity to examine a number of possible ways to understand the question: *how does food insecurity come to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?* To begin, I review the empirical data and debate on the definition, incidence, and outcomes of food insecurity. Subsequently, I consider a structural account focussed on the operation of the neoliberal political economy to explain how food insecurity comes to be in this country. I then suggest that more post-structural theoretical explanations are required to engage with the causes and dynamics of food insecurity in a neoliberal society. I then move from secondary research and theorisation to primary research. I seek the views of individuals familiar with food insecurity on a professional or occupational basis, as a means to explore both the issue of food insecurity and my theorisation of it.

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction	Causes for concern	Associated factors	A structural explanation	A post-structural explanation
Research question	Context	Thesis structure	Thesis argument	

A diagram like this appears at the beginning of each chapter, providing a simple map to locate chapter content in the context of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant empirical data about the outcomes and incidence of food insecurity. Chapter 3 reviews empirical data concerning demographic factors that are associated with and/or contribute to food insecurity. Chapter 4 gives an explanation for how food insecurity comes to be based on patterns in these demographic factors. It argues that the neoliberal political economy has both exacerbated and created new causes of vulnerability to food insecurity, following the ‘neoliberal turn’ of the 1980s. Chapter 5 extends this structural account with a more post-structural account, on the basis that the neoliberal turn is associated with a transition in governmentalities, which inform governance regimes and citizens’ subjectivities, as well as government policy. It suggests a possible explanation for how food insecurity comes to be focused on the social-political context within which the neoliberal political economy operates and the depoliticisation of the issue.

Chapter 6 describes Q methodology and the methods used to gather data in my investigation of the subject positions of people professionally familiar with food insecurity. Chapter 7 details

the results of this research. Chapter 8 reviews these results in relation to the earlier theorisations and discusses depoliticisation as a theoretical tool.

### **1.4 Thesis Argument: Opening Thoughts**

Existing research into food insecurity in rich liberal democracies provides a wealth of data about the existence, incidence and outcomes of food insecurity, a survey of which backs the view that “the need to address issues of food insecurity in high-income countries seems pressing” (Gorton, Bullen, and Mhurchu 2010, 2). This is not controversial. This data shows that particular groups of people, across food secure, rich liberal democracies, are more likely to be food insecure. This regularity of suffering suggests a structural influence on food insecurity. I argue that the structure(s) of neoliberal political economies provide a strong explanation as to the nature of this structural influence.

I contend that empirical research and a structural explanation are necessary to understand how food insecurity comes to be in rich liberal democracies, but that they do not offer a sufficient account of the problem. By the end of this thesis, I will have described one possible explanatory augmentation to this account, sought to engage this potential explanation with research, and reviewed the novel theoretical and practical implications of this application. Specifically, I advance from the idea that the persistence of food insecurity is driven by the neoliberal political economy to suggest that this persistence may be supported by the hegemony of neoliberal rationality in the governmentalities and subjectivities of the social-political context of Aotearoa New Zealand. I contend that food insecurity, in this context, may be a depoliticised issue, and that this explanation ties structural and material realities with subjectivities and governance regimes in a novel and compelling manner.

Essential conceptual elements in this thesis include: (1) a hegemonic neoliberal political rationality operating at the level of both structures/policy and subjective/governance in Aotearoa New Zealand; (2) the multi-faceted (and political) vulnerability of groups of citizens who fit poorly with the labour demands of a neoliberal economy; and (3) depoliticisation operating at the level of subjectivity/governance. These hint at the possibilities that this examination of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand has for broader understandings and approaches to examining dynamics in neoliberal societies.

This thesis does not seek to document the public’s perceptions of food insecurity in a statistically representative way, nor to build a comprehensive account of the material and

subjective realities of food insecurity to highlight specific solutions. Rather, the application of theoretical concepts to a body of empirical data is intended to elucidate the ways that food insecurity is *thought* about in Aotearoa New Zealand, bearing in mind its troubling persistence. The Q methodology research is intended to investigate how food insecurity *is* thought about, by a specific group of informed actors. The intention, in combining theory and research in this thesis is that the results, and their implications, will suggest some pathways towards generating more effective action against food insecurity.

This approach provides some interesting insights in several areas. First, it collates a body of evidence regarding food insecurity situation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, draws on this evidence to argue that the operation of the neoliberal political economy drives vulnerability to food insecurity in this country. Third, it examines a potential explanation for food insecurity that focuses on subjectivities rather than structures, opening this line of investigation to evaluation and further interrogation elsewhere. Fourth, the research sheds some light on a baffling gap between neoliberal political rationality<sup>5</sup> and ‘third way’ ideological consensus on one hand, and empirical evidence and the degree of consensus in the concerns of people occupationally familiar with food insecurity on the other. Fifth, the thesis applies depoliticisation in novel ways – in a theorisation of micro-level subjectivities, and in the area of food insecurity – providing some evidence of its promise as a concept with theoretical traction.

The theorisation in this thesis of the depoliticisation of deprivation is not initiated on the basis of a complete silence of concern regarding food insecurity. The continued and expanding operations of food banks is a testament to human compassion and concern amongst the public of Aotearoa New Zealand. There is a growing body of research into food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>6</sup>. Concern about food insecurity or hunger has been voiced in media reports, in political campaigns, and by independent commentators. Rather, the theorisation is initiated in an attempt to grasp how these elements of concern remain isolated from structural/policy

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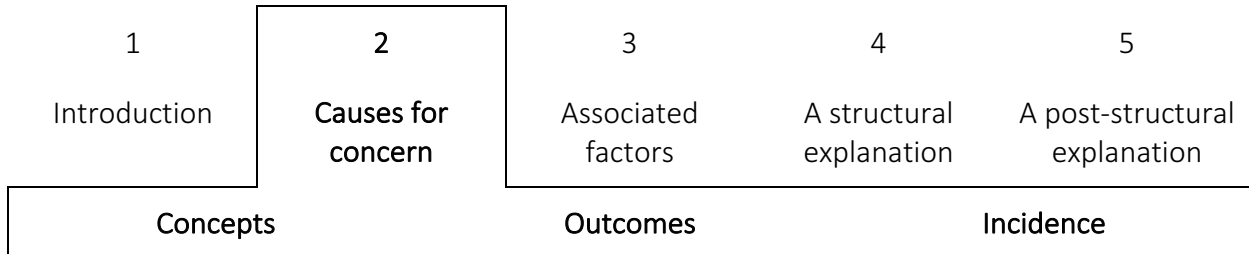
<sup>5</sup> This could also be called ‘neoliberal reason’ (Brown 2015), the neoliberal “intellectual paradigm” (Roper 2011, 14), or the “intellectual basis” of neoliberal reforms (Larner 2000, 7).

<sup>6</sup> See for example: Anscombe (2009); Carter, Kruse, Blakely, and Collings (2011); Carter, Lanumata, Kruse, and Gorton (2010); Lowry (2013); McNeill (2011); McPherson (2006); Ni Mhurchu, Blakely, Jiang, Eyles, and Rodgers (2010); Parnell (2005); Parnell, Reid, Wilson, McKenzie, and Russell (2001); Smith (2011); Smith, Parnell, and Brown (2010); Smith, Parnell, Brown, and Gray (2013b); Smith, Parnell, Brown, and Gray (2013a); Wynd (2005, 2009, 2011).

elements which are empirically important in supporting the persistent suffering of food insecurity by a significant minority of the population in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I begin with an empirical examination of food insecurity (Chapters 2 and 3). These inform the following theoretical accounts of how food comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand (Chapters 4 and 5). I then turn to an empirical investigation to shed some light on how food comes to be in this country, and specifically my theorisation of this (Chapters 6 and 7). Finally, I review the results in terms of my theorisation, elaborate the concept of depoliticisation in view of my application of it in this thesis, and outline the contributions of this thesis as well as possible areas of interest for future investigation.

## Chapter 2 – Causes for Concern: Food Insecurity in Facts and Figures



“Few people would doubt that hunger, when it is present, poses a problem”.

- Goldenberg (2012), *No Such Thing as a Free Lunch*

This chapter (Chapter 2) outlines the empirical basis for the initial way of thinking about food insecurity adopted in this thesis, locating it as a problematic social condition in Aotearoa New Zealand. It defines and describes the problem of food insecurity as a material reality. The chapter begins with a review of the concept of food (in)security, its development and how it is used in this thesis. Then, it draws on published empirical research to describe the scope of the problem, reviewing evidence first of the outcomes of food insecurity in rich liberal democracies and then of the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### 2.1 The Concept of Food Insecurity

As is usual with concepts, what ‘food insecurity’ refers to has changed over time. This section will describe the development of the definition and measurement of food insecurity in academic and policy discourse.

#### 2.1.1 Defining Food Insecurity

Much of the literature about food (in)security focuses on economically developing countries, with good reason; the rates and severity of food insecurity are far lower in rich countries. The world food crisis of the early 1970s drove general adoption of the concept (Allen 2007). Rooted in ‘development’ (of ‘third world’ countries), the concept of food security was concerned with the food *supply* – the availability of food at the national level (Maxwell and Smith 1992; Bowers, Carter, Gorton, Heta, Lanumata, Maddison, McKerchar, Ni Mhurchu, O’Dea, and

Pearce 2009; Maxwell 1996). Amartya Sen's (1981) seminal work on famine brought the importance of *access* to food into the concept of food security. The concept has more recently been applied the household level (Maxwell 1996).

The concept of food security has developed from addressing the root of hunger (food insufficiency, where the problem is the amount of food) to encompass access to food, the cultural acceptability of the manner of access, food quality, and being confident about meeting these conditions (Carter *et al.* 2010). A commonly cited and widely accepted definition<sup>7</sup> of food security is certainty of

access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life and includes at a minimum: a) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and b) the assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. (Anderson 1990, 1575)

Conversely, food *insecurity* exists when there are limits to, or uncertainty about, the availability of nutritionally adequate, safe foods, or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Anderson 1990). While the links between macro-level food security and micro-level food security remain significant (Riches 1997a), the security of food supply is not a concern for economically developed countries today. In these countries, the inability to access food has replaced the availability of food generally as the dominant barrier to food security.

Hunger, food insufficiency, food poverty, and food insecurity are a closely related set of concepts. Hunger in Aotearoa New Zealand is of the highest concern, because it “is both a structural problem and a source of violence in that it does physical harm” (Shepherd 2012, 205). The term hunger conjures the acutely embodied nature of lack of access to food; it is a word with a “sharp edge” (Allen 2007, 22). Everyone is familiar with the sensation of hunger, though to differing extents. The claim that hunger is a good thing is facetious. ‘Hunger’ is more than an abstract ‘outcome’ of food insecurity; it is the embodied suffering of people vulnerable to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand today.

However, the concept of ‘food insecurity’ is used throughout this thesis for theoretical reasons. Hunger is “a uniquely individual experience” (Tarasuk 2001a, 1), and the concept has short-term implications. This narrowness does not make it especially useful in identifying or

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

analysing societal dynamics, whereas food (in)security is a much broader concept concerned with a social, as opposed to an individual physiological, condition (Allen 2007), and provides a useful framework with which to address hunger (Riches 1997d).

It is important to acknowledge the distinction and distance between the starvation and chronic malnutrition of famine in developing countries and ‘First World hunger’ (Riches 1997d). The scale and severity of food insecurity and hunger in Aotearoa New Zealand and other economically developed countries is certainly less than in developing countries (Riches 1997d, 64). However, it is all the more egregious for being surrounded by plenty; and all the more disturbing because it is a persistent social condition suffered by a significant minority of the population.

Dowler and O’Connor (2012) provide a comprehensive description of food security which is relevant to the context of Aotearoa New Zealand:

For industrialised countries, ‘food security’ implies that people have sufficient money to purchase the food they want to eat, to meet social as well as health and nutritional norms; that this money is not absorbed in other expenditure demands (rent, fuel, debt repayment, etc.); that people can reach shops or markets which stock appropriate food at affordable prices, or they can grow or otherwise obtain food in ways which are dignified and in keeping with social norms. (45)

This thesis examines food insecurity at the household level, for several reasons. First, there is recent and thorough data from Aotearoa New Zealand available for household food insecurity. Second, this level of analysis recognises the immediate social context in which food insecurity occurs: “hunger is a community and household problem, not just an individual one” (Allen 2007, 22). For instance, decisions about food purchases are made within the context of a household (Ricciuto, Tarasuk and Yatchew 2006 in Smith 2011). Third, while the structure of households determines in part the ways that food insecurity affects particular individuals within them, household food security remains the problem. Mothers have been found to go hungry to allow their children to eat more (Bhattacharya, Currie, and Haider 2004), but the hunger of the mother in this situation is a function of food insecurity in the household.

The intra-household dynamics of food insecurity are important, and Maxwell and Smith (1992) note that households should not be presumed to be totally cohesive, as well as giving other concerns about addressing food insecurity at the level of the household in economically

developing countries (Maxwell and Smith 1992, 19-20)<sup>8</sup>. Despite these concerns, the benefits of addressing food insecurity at the household level for examining the characteristics and incidence of food insecurity at a national level in Aotearoa New Zealand in this thesis support its use here.

The concept of ‘food insecurity’ and its use in this thesis have been explained. How the concept is operationalised in empirical research will now be examined.

### 2.1.2 Measuring Food Security

Before the development of an operational definition of hunger, it was difficult to address this social condition on a large scale (Radimer, Olson, and Campbell 1990, abstract). The study *Development of Indicators to Assess Hunger* (Radimer *et al.* 1990) brought some cohesiveness to attempts to bridge the gap between the micro-level subjective experience (of a hungry *person*) and wider trends in society (involving hungry *people*). Four aspects of household hunger were identified: the amount of food available to the household; the suitability or appropriateness of food; anxiety or uncertainty about food; and the social acceptability of the manner in which food was acquired (Radimer *et al.* 1990). These elements were incorporated into the USA’s national Household Food Security Survey Measure (HFSSM), an 18-question module covering a range of the respondents’ experiences, which has been used and adapted around the world (Coates, Frongillo, Rogers, Webb, Wilde, and Houser 2006).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, household food insecurity has been measured nationally in the 1997 *National Nutrition Survey* (of adults), the 2002 *National Children’s Nutrition Survey*, and the 2008/09 *Adult Nutrition Survey* (Smith 2011, 29)<sup>9</sup>. The first of these surveys developed eight food security indicator statements, all of which are focussed on “the issue of affordability” (Russell, Parnell, and Wilson 1999, 100-2). These are presented in Table 1. The use of indicator statements constitutes a “red flag” approach to measuring food insecurity – they “provide some indication of vulnerability but are not designed to be scaled or grouped” (Vozoris and Tarasuk 2003, 123). As the statements in Table 1 are oriented towards financial constraints, the

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<sup>8</sup> For a thorough discussion of ‘Conceptual Issues in Household Food Security’ in developing countries, much of which is applicable to Aotearoa New Zealand today, see pp. 18-49.

<sup>9</sup> For an up-to-date list see <http://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collections-and-surveys/surveys/current-recent-surveys/nutrition-survey>. The site explains that *The Ministry of Health runs national nutrition surveys for adults and children, to collect information on the food and nutrient intake of New Zealanders*. When it does this, or next intends to do so, is not clear.



possibility of physical access to food contributing to food insecurity is not captured (Smith 2011). The possibility of physical barriers to accessing food in Aotearoa New Zealand will be examined in section 3.2.

I/we can afford to eat properly	I/we make use of special food grants or foodbanks when I/we do not have enough money for food
I/we eat less because of lack of money	The variety of foods I am (we are) able to eat is limited by a lack of money
Food runs out in my/our household due to lack of money	I/we rely on others to provide food and/or money for food, for my/our household, when I/we don't have enough money
I feel stressed because of not having enough money for food	I feel stressed because I can't provide the food I want for social occasions

**Table 1: Food security indicator statements validated for Aotearoa New Zealand**

Two details about measuring food (in)security should be noted. First, Radimer *et al.* (1990, 1545) highlight that food insecurity is a “managed process”. This acknowledges that “people are not passive victims of sudden events but are active participants in responding to the risks that they face in their daily lives”, an observation echoed in ‘development’ literature (Coates *et al.* 2006, 1439S). Second, and relatedly, measures of poverty are a poor proxy for measuring food insecurity or hunger. As discussed later, not all households in poverty are food insecure, and not all food insecure households are in poverty (Rose 1999). Thus, while there is a strong relationship between poverty and food insecurity, indicators of poverty are not accurate measures of food security.

A means of measuring food insecurity allows the quantification of two dimensions of food insecurity – its outcomes and its incidence. These are examined in the next two sections (2.2 and 2.3). This quantification enables food insecurity to be conceived of as a problematic social condition.

## 2.2 Outcomes of Food Insecurity

This section will review research into the outcomes of suffering food insecurity, including health outcomes for children and adults, and social implications.

### 2.2.1 Health

There is a large and growing body of research into the health outcomes of food insecurity, which will be only briefly reviewed here. The purpose of this review is to demonstrate the significant detrimental consequences of food insecurity for the health of individuals. Of course, these consequences are detrimental for society more generally – for example, a drain on health systems and budgets, and the loss of peoples’ potential as fellow citizens and productive workers<sup>10</sup>.

Food insecurity “can affect food and nutrient intake by restricting household food supply” (Ministry of Health 2006, 56). It follows that both hunger and malnutrition are possible outcomes of food insecurity (Anderson 1990), both of which have long-term implications. Additionally, the concept of food insecurity recognises stress about accessing quality, appropriate food in socially acceptable ways.

#### Children

Gundersen and Kreider (2009) provide a useful summary of findings relating food insecurity to the health of children, including: poor health; psychosocial problems; worse developmental outcomes; more chronic illnesses; a higher likelihood of obesity; impaired mental proficiency; frequent stomach-aches and headaches; and behaviour problems. Children in food insecure households are three times as likely to be hospitalised before they are three years old than food-secure children, with other factors controlled (Cook, Frank, Berkowitz, Black, Casey, Cutts, Meyers, Zaldivar, Skalicky, Levenson, Heeren, and Nord 2004). Food insecure children have a higher risk of being overweight or obese, with important demographic variables controlled (Casey, Simpson, Gossett, Bogle, Champagne, Connell, Harsha, McCabe-Sellers, Robbins, Stuff, and Weber 2006). However, living in food insecure households does not appear, on average, to substantially affect the quality of younger (0-11 years old) children’s nutritional intake, even in households where adults’ nutrition intake is deficient – though this is complicated by the relation of poverty to food insecurity (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2007; Rose 1999; Bhattacharya *et al.* 2004).

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<sup>10</sup> Again, see *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis* (Rashbrooke 2013a) and *The Spirit Level* (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) for strong arguments supporting this idea.

The impact of food insecurity on childrens' education has been well researched. Jyoti, Frongillo, and Jones (2005, 2831) found food insecurity to be associated with "specific developmental consequences for children" and noted that these associations differed by gender. Other studies have found food insecurity to be associated with cognition, classroom behaviour, social skills, weight gain and longitudinal test results as an indicator of development<sup>11</sup>.

#### Adults

Adults living in food insecure households, as compared to those living in food secure households, have poorer physical and mental health, with other factors controlled (Stuff, Casey, Szeto, Gossett, Robbins, Simpson, Connell, and Bogle 2004). Such adults also have nutrient inadequacy, most marked for protein, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, vitamin B-6, folate, vitamin B-12, magnesium, phosphorus, and zinc (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2008). Food insecurity is also associated with having type-2 diabetes among adults, even allowing for body mass index (Seligman, Bindman, Vittinghoff, Kanaya, and Kushel 2007).

Food insecurity has been found to be linked to overweight and obesity in adults living in poverty, though the methods used do not allow for a causal link to be established (Martin and Ferris 2007). Importantly, Martin and Ferris found that "poverty alone is not a risk factor for obesity; there appears to be something specific about not being able to consistently have access to enough food that contributes to adult obesity" (2007, 34).

Vozoris and Tarasuk (2003, 122) found that people in

food-insufficient households had significantly higher odds of rating their health as poor or fair, of having restricted activity, of having poor functional health, of suffering from multiple chronic conditions, of having major depression and distress, and of having poor social support compared with those in food-sufficient households... [They] were also significantly more likely to report having heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and food allergies.

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<sup>11</sup> See for instance Alaimo, Olson, and Frongillo (2001); Bryan, Osendarp, Hughes, Calvaresi, Baghurst, and Klinken (2004); Dunifon and Kowaleski-Jones (2003); Howard (2011); Jyoti *et al.* (2005); Melchior, Caspi, Howard, Ambler, Bolton, Mountain, and Moffitt (2009); Pollitt, Cueto, and Jacoby (1998); Siefert, Heflin, Corcoran, and Williams (2001); Stormer and Harrison (2003); Weinreb, Wehler, Perloff, Scott, Hosmer, Sagor, and Gundersen (2002).

There are notable gender differences in the health effects of food insecurity. Men are more likely to be “underweight or normal weight and less likely to be overweight”, whereas women are less likely to be “normal weight and more likely to be morbidly obese” (Vozoris and Tarasuk 2003, 122-3). Food insecure, as compared to food secure, women have been found to have: lower intakes of energy and inadequate intakes of Vitamin A, folate, iron, and magnesium (Tarasuk and Beaton 1999); to have a higher body mass index at childbearing age (Olson 1999); and to have mean intakes of energy, calcium, iron, vitamin E, magnesium, and zinc below two thirds of the (USA’s) recommended daily allowance (Rose and Oliveira 1997).

Mental health also features a strong gender difference. Carter *et al.* (2011, 1468) found a “strong crude association between food insecurity and psychological distress in the NZ population”. With other variables controlled for, “a 60% (males) to 110% (females) elevated odds of psychological distress among those reporting food insecurity remained” (Carter *et al.* 2011, 1468).

### 2.2.2 Social Implications

Food insecurity can have social implications beyond children’s behaviour. An exploratory study by Hamelin, Habicht, and Beaudry (1999) found that as well as physical impairment, household food insecurity led to psychological suffering and ‘sociofamilial perturbations’ within households. Psychological suffering occurred due to food insecurity constraining peoples’ ability to follow norms and values, and because of stress, for instance about losing custody of a child (Hamelin *et al.* 1999). Sociofamilial perturbations included changes to eating patterns and rituals, disruptions to household dynamics and distorted means of food acquisition and management (Hamelin *et al.* 1999). In addition, chronic food insecurity has broader ‘social implications: it erodes conviviality; impairs the learning of children and adults; decreases productivity and constructive participation in social life; intensifies processes of exclusion and feelings of powerlessness; erodes the transfer of knowledge and practices between generations; and threatens harmonious community life (Hamelin *et al.* 1999).

This section has reviewed how household food insecurity is detrimental to society: it damages the physical and mental health of individuals, and the social fabric of families and communities. The next section (2.3) will review another dimension of food insecurity as a problematic social condition: its incidence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## 2.3 The Incidence of Food Insecurity

This section will review recent data about the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. First, though, a comment on the remarkable shift in the orientation of food security in academic literature. Until the mid-1980s, the concept of food security was almost exclusively applied to economically developing countries<sup>12</sup>. Food insecurity in economically developed countries re-emerged as a social condition and as an issue in economically developed countries in the mid-1980s, and the concept of food insecurity developed to encompass individual, household, community and regional levels (Allen 2007; Maxwell and Smith 1992).

### 2.3.1 Sources of Data

There are two readily available but not rigorously accurate sources of data, often used as a proxy measure of the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. One is a calculation: comparing data about incomes of households ‘in poverty’<sup>13</sup> or with particularly low incomes with cost-of-living and/or or cost-of-diet calculations to produce the number of people without sufficient income to pay their costs of living. While this can give a sense of scale, it neglects the ‘managed’ nature of experiencing food insecurity, as well as the myriad differences in household circumstances, but is a rapid and less costly way of estimating rates of food insecurity. This calculation certainly provides an idea of how many people are struggling with hardship and are likely to be at least vulnerable to suffering food insecurity.

Another proxy for the rate of food insecurity is data about food assistance provision. Food parcel provision by food banks is a commonly cited indicator in Aotearoa New Zealand (McNeill 2011, 117), including in media coverage (for example Collins 2005). This is supported by the thorough and regular publication of data by the Salvation Army, a major charitable institution in Aotearoa New Zealand. The rate of ‘food grants’ to beneficiaries by the

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<sup>12</sup> Food insecurity had been a problem for economically developed countries during the 1930s, but national food security was not, so that the Great Depression of the 1930s saw the painful irony of ‘bread lines knee deep in wheat’, as it was termed in the USA (Poppendieck 1998b). National food security – food supplies – became a concern, particularly for Britain, following the food shortages of World War Two, prompting ideas of self-sufficiency (see for instance Ritson 1980). Once the surge in industrialised agricultural production erased worries about national-level food security in the liberal democracies, food insecurity and hunger were not problems in prosperous welfare states.

<sup>13</sup> New Zealand has no official poverty line (Office of the Auditor-General New Zealand 2013), although the number of households with ‘below sixty percent of the median income after housing costs’ is frequently used by *Statistics New Zealand* in producing their publications.

state welfare apparatus is a less-used indicator of the incidence of food insecurity (McNeill 2011, 117).

Despite the rigor of the Salvation Army, food assistance data should be considered as an indicative measure rather than accurate data about the incidence of food insecurity (McNeill 2011, 117). Not all food insecure households will utilise these services for a range of reasons, and data about food parcels given out by food banks is likely to be of poor quality (McNeill 2011; Riches 1997e; Wynd 2005). McNeill (2011) suggests that the prevalence of food banks themselves, as well as information about who uses them, is more reliable and more useful information.

Statistically sound data about the incidence of food insecurity in New Zealand, typically at the household level, has been collected by several surveys, and these will be summarised here.

### 2.3.2 New Zealand Data

Parnell *et al.* (2001, 144) found that having insufficient food appears to be “a more prevalent problem among adults in New Zealand than in Australia or the US”<sup>14</sup>. Parnell (2005) found “unequivocal evidence that food insecurity exists in New Zealand, [and] that it can be quantified and associated with nutrition outcomes” (abstract). Several large-scale surveys have included measures of food insecurity in New Zealand, and several of these use the same measure of food insecurity.

The *1997 National Nutrition Survey* set out to “provide baseline data on the nutritional status and food security of the population” (Russell *et al.* 1999, 4). A set of eight validated indicator statements were developed and tested prior to inclusion in this national survey (see Parnell *et al.* 2001). For brevity, three of these indicator statements, shown in Table 2, will be followed through the surveys that use them. As noted previously, these statements all “relate to the issue of affordability” (Russell *et al.* 1999, 100).

Statement	Statement concerned with:
‘We can afford to eat properly’	Financial access to food
‘We eat less because of lack of money’	Quantity of food accessible

<sup>14</sup> Data in the different countries has been collected with “similar but not identical tools” (Parnell *et al.* 2001, 144).

‘The variety of foods we are able to eat is limited by a lack of money’	(Nutritional) quality of food accessible
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**Table 2: Three food security indicator statements and their concerns**

#### 1997 National Nutrition Survey

The sample for this survey was nationally representative for the New Zealand population aged 15 years and above (Russell *et al.* 1999).

##### *Financial access to food*

13 percent of the population “reported that their household ‘can afford to eat properly’ only *sometimes*” (Russell *et al.* 1999, 100, emphasis in original).

38 percent of Pacific people and 28.5 percent of Māori responded in this way, compared to 9.5 percent of New Zealand European and Others (NZEO) (Russell *et al.* 1999).

The report also provides the differences in rates of responses by gender, age, and level of deprivation in geographic area where these are notable.

##### *Quantity of food accessible*

“Between 12 percent and 14 percent reported that their households ‘eat less because of lack of money’, *sometimes* or *often*” (Russell *et al.* 1999, 101, emphasis in original).

A trend regarding ethnic groups similar to the previous statement is apparent.

##### *(Nutritional) quality of food accessible*

27 percent of New Zealanders responded that ‘The variety of foods I am (we are) able to eat is limited by a lack of money’, in their household *sometimes* or *often* (Russell *et al.* 1999).

The same trend along ethnic lines is evident for this statement as well.

#### 2002 National Children’s Nutrition Survey

The sample for this survey was representative of New Zealand schoolchildren aged between five and 14 years old, though food insecurity was measured at the household level, as elsewhere (Ministry of Health 2003, xx). The survey report examines the results of responses to each of the statements by general population, ethnic grouping and deprivation by geographic area.

##### *Financial access to food*

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“78 percent of households reported that they could always afford to eat properly, but 20.1 percent said they could only *Sometimes* afford to do so” (Ministry of Health 2003, 109, emphasis in original).

86.1 percent of households with children identified as New Zealand European and Others (NZEO) stated that they could always afford to eat properly, compared with 64.3 percent of households with Māori, and 46.6 percent with Pacific children (Ministry of Health 2003, 109).

#### *Quantity of food accessible*

“About 18 percent of households said they ‘eat less because of lack of money’ *Sometimes* (15.3 percent) and *Often* (2.8 percent)” (Ministry of Health 2003, 111, emphasis in original).

Again, strong differences along ethnic lines were evident: “Eating less because of lack of money was experienced *Often* or *Sometimes* most frequently by households with Pacific children (47.7 percent), compared with those with Māori (30.7 percent) and NZEO children (10.2 percent)” (Ministry of Health 2003, 111, emphasis in original).

#### *(Nutritional) quality of food accessible*

“Over one third (34.6 percent) of households reported that the variety of foods they were able to eat was limited by a lack of money *Sometimes* (25.6 percent) or *Often* (9 percent)” (Ministry of Health 2003, 112, emphasis in original).

A similar pattern to the other statements was evident for ethnic groups.

#### 2008/09 Adult Nutrition Survey

The sample for this survey was representative of the national population aged 15 years and over. Data was reported in terms of deprivation level of areas, but not ethnic groups.

#### *Financial access to food*

Eighty percent of participants said that ‘I/we can afford to eat properly’ *always*, while 16.4 percent said that they could only do this *sometimes* (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, 259).

#### *Quantity of food accessible*

2.9 percent of households *often*, and 12.5 percent of households *sometimes*, ‘eat less because of



lack of money’ (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, 260).

#### *(Nutritional) quality of food accessible*

“Having a variety of food was sometimes an issue for 22.8% of New Zealand households and was often an issue for 7.6%” (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, 260).

The report used the survey data to sort respondents into one of three categories of food security status (see Smith *et al.* 2010, 17). These categories have been validated and associated with nutritional outcomes in New Zealand by Parnell (2005). The report found that “59.1% of households were classified as being Fully/almost food secure, 33.7% were classified as being Moderately food secure, and 7.3% were classified as having Low food security” (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, xxv).

Reflecting on older data using these categories, the report noted that between 1997 and 2008/09, “the proportion of households classified as having Low food security increased for males (1.6% to 5.6%) and females (3.8% to 8.8%)” (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, xxv).

#### Family Food Environment Survey

The Family Food Environment Survey (FFES) has a cross-sectional rather than a representative sample, drawn from families living in Dunedin and Wellington with one or more children aged between five and 18 years old (Smith *et al.* 2010). Data was collected between 2007 and 2008. As shown in Figure 1, the survey report uses the three categories of food security status, and examines responses to the eight indicator statements by income group – high, medium and low (Smith *et al.* 2010).

	Total		High		Medium		Low	
Food security status	n	% <sup>a</sup>	n	% <sup>a</sup>	n	% <sup>a</sup>	n	% <sup>a</sup>
Full/almost full food security	82	60	54	84	23	68	5	13 <sup>c</sup>
Moderate security	41	30	8	13	10	29	23	61 <sup>b</sup>
Low security	13	10	2	3	1	3	10	26 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Percentage within income group

<sup>b</sup> Low > med and high

<sup>c</sup> Low < med and high

**Figure 1: Prevalence of level of household food insecurity. Figure from Smith *et al.* (2010, 18)**

**Survey of Families, Income and Employment (SoFIE)**

This longitudinal study asked three questions related to food insecurity (Smith *et al.* 2010):

- ‘In the past 12 months have you made use of special food grants or foodbanks when you did not have enough money for food’;
- ‘In the past 12 months have you personally been forced to buy cheaper food so that you could pay for other things you needed’; and
- ‘In the past 12 months have you personally gone without fresh fruit and vegetables so that you could pay for other things you needed’.

The results of these questions are not comparable to the national nutrition surveys because they gathered data on individual rather than household food insecurity, and have not been validated as an index of food security (Smith *et al.* 2010).

Using data from this survey, Carter and colleagues (2010, 604) found that in 2004/5, “over 15% of the SoFIE population in New Zealand were food insecure”.

**OECD: Society at a Glance**

This study found that food insecurity in New Zealand “increased substantially” from 10.3 percent in 2007 to 17.2 percent in 2010 (OECD 2014, 1, 3). This contrasts notably with other findings in the study, such as a drop in ‘Relative poverty’ from 11.0 percent to 10.3 percent, and a rise in wages across both ‘Average’ and ‘Bottom 10%’ measures in the same period (OECD 2014). A possible reason for this apparent disparity lies in the unemployment rate, which rose from 3.8% to 6.4% (OECD 2014). The origin of the data in this study and the measure(s) used in gathering it is not clear.

**2.3.3 Observations**

This review of recent research into rates of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand prompts two important observations. The first is the degree of consistency of the rate of food insecurity across studies. Food insecurity is a persistent problem for a significant minority of the population and has been for many years; the numbers fluctuate, but all are troubling. No study has produced a number below 10.3 percent (the OECD study) at any point since the initial quantification in 1997. The lowest figure was drawn from a year in which the country’s

economy was considered to be booming, suggesting that even in economic good times, one in ten Kiwis were suffering from food insecurity.

Concerning in itself, the consistency in the incidence of food insecurity in this country is startling when compared to the progress being made by countries with fewer resources and less developed infrastructure and primary production systems. In line with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, "[t]he proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990" (United Nations 2015, n.p.). This staggering advance puts the lack of effective action against food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand in stark relief as a problem with neither acknowledgement nor progress towards a solution.

Another observation is the marked difference in rates of food insecurity between particular demographic groups, which is consistent across time. Data analysed by ethnic group, gender, and level of income make it clear that food insecurity is not suffered by all citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand equally. These differences are examined in more depth in Chapter 4.

Gorton *et al.* (2010, 2) remark that "the need to address issues of food insecurity in high-income countries seems pressing". This certainly seems to be the case in Aotearoa New Zealand. The empirical evidence briefly reviewed so far in this thesis shows that food insecurity is a substantial, persistent and costly social condition. The question, then, is *how has this problem come to be?* The first answer to this question in this thesis comes in the form of the empirical evidence about demographic factors that are associated with and/or contribute to food insecurity, reviewed in Chapter 3. Subsequently, and building on this information, I argue for two answers – theoretical explanations – in Chapters 4 and 5.

## Chapter 3 – Factors in Food Insecurity: Demographic Disparity

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction	Causes for concern	Associated factors	A structural explanation	A post-structural explanation
Economic	Physical	Sociocultural	Political	

“You don’t need no silicone to calculate poverty”.

- Joe Strummer/The Clash, *One More Time*

This chapter reviews the body of research concerned with identifying factors associated (causally or otherwise) with food insecurity in rich liberal democracies. My reading of this literature leads me to believe that there are strong structural determinants of food insecurity in rich liberal democracies. This goes some way to describing how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. The organisation of the review in this chapter broadly follows the analysis of literature by Gorton *et al.* (2010) with four categories of “environmental influences” on household food insecurity – economic, physical, sociocultural, and political. The review includes research from Aotearoa New Zealand as well as other rich liberal democracies where it is relevant.

‘Environmental influences’ surround individuals and provide the situation or context for individual action – from economic structures to cultural contexts. The focus on environmental factors in this review does not deny that individual attitudes or behaviours – popularly conceived of as alcoholism, drug use, gambling, laziness and wastefulness – can contribute to household food insecurity. Rather, this focus captures a significant body of empirical research. Aside from the substantial amount of research in this area, there are three reasons to proceed with this focus. First, it is supported by research into the links between diet and individual or household competencies or practices. This suggests that ‘good’ skills and practices are not particularly lacking amongst people with low incomes (for an overview see section 2.1 in Smith 2011).

Second, this focus is supported by the striking rise in demand for food bank assistance from the Salvation Army in Aotearoa New Zealand (described in Chapter 1). The increase, from 2,124 in 1991 to 10,261 in 1992, has a compelling explanation (Uttley 1997): the 1991 Budget, which heavily cut government spending on welfare, including benefit cuts, in April 1991 (Mackay 1995, n.p.). The idea that the apparently severe increase in households' inability to meet the costs of living can be explained by a very large number of people suddenly acquiring unaffordable behavioural problems is not plausible. As Wynd (2005, 8) observes, the "major driver for escalating foodbank use" over this period was clearly not "the personal failings of individuals" but a sudden increase in the number of households with inadequate income. Indeed, the National government at that time "quietly agreed", taking measures to reduce the number of people seeking assistance from food banks (Wynd 2005, 8).

Third, this focus is supported by previous analyses of food insecurity. Wynd (2005, 45) argues that: "Food insecurity in developed countries such as New Zealand is not inevitable. It is structural". Riches (1997a, 53-4) argues that: "The roots of hunger in Canada today are to be found in the structural preconditions of poverty, inequality and powerlessness, all of which are increasing".

### **3.1 Economic Factors**

A range of economic factors are associated with food insecurity, though the primary one is income. Many of the other factors explored here have an effect on income, sometimes interacting with each other to do so. Factors reviewed here include: income; wealth; debt; the cost(s) of living; employment; being a beneficiary; age; and living in a large or sole-parent household.

#### **3.1.1 Income**

The "underpinning determinant" of household food insecurity, in Aotearoa New Zealand and throughout rich liberal democracies, is insufficient income (Bowers *et al.* 2009; Carter *et al.* 2010; Else 1999; Rose 1999; Rose, Gundersen, and Oliveira 1998; Smith 2011, 22; Vozoris and Tarasuk 2003; Wynd 2005, 2011). The amount of money spent on food decreases as household income falls (Smith 2011; Turrell 1996). Research has consistently shown that "low-income groups have to allocate a much greater proportion of their household income for food, yet they spend significantly less on food per household member" compared to food secure households (Turrell 1996, 616). Similarly, food insecure households, as opposed to food secure households,

spend significantly less on food as well as on fresh fruit and vegetables specifically (Smith 2011).

Incomes are only insufficient relative to the costs of living. Uttley argued, in 1997, that citizens in Aotearoa New Zealand had been facing “a sustained period of reductions in their living standards”, their costs rising faster than incomes (1997, 90). Wynd (2005, 21) noted that “the average income for clients using foodbanks has fallen steadily in real terms since 2000”, using data from the Auckland City Mission. Cox and Black (2011, 9, 21), using *Statistics New Zealand* data from 2008 to 2011, show that “the cost of living in the Waikato has been increasing faster than income”, with a more pronounced gap for Māori and Pacifica.

Using food prices from 2008, Hopgood, Asher, Wall, Grant, Stewart, Muimuiheata, and Exeter (2010) calculated the cost of meal plans for children which met the *New Zealand National Food and Nutrition Guidelines*. Smith (2011, 52) compared these with incomes and found that, for “low-income families with someone in paid employment this would mean a family with one child would have to spend between 20-59% of their income on food”, while “a family receiving a government benefit for their main source of income would have to spend even more than that”. Similar findings have been made in Australia (Kettings, Sinclair, and Voevodin 2009, 570).

It is not only insufficiency of income that is associated with food insecurity. Instability of income, distinct from insufficient income, has been found to be a factor in food insecurity in the USA (Rose 1999). It should be noted that, while extremely significant, insufficient income is not the sole cause of household food insecurity (Bowers *et al.* 2009; Rose 1999).

### 3.1.2 Wealth

Related to income, but distinct from it, is wealth, “the accumulation of economic resources over time” (Carter *et al.* 2010, 606). Food insecure households “are more likely to have episodes of income loss and are less able to borrow funds to make up for sudden income losses or high expenditures” (Gunderson and Gruber 2001 in Coleman-Jensen 2011, 85). These kinds of income shocks can be buffered by wealth or access to good credit, whereas not having wealth, which is linked to not having “the capacity to save”, makes households vulnerable to unexpected costs and changes in income (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 5).

This in turn makes them vulnerable to suffering food insecurity, lacking the means to access sufficient food. Income appears to be more strongly associated with food insecurity than wealth, probably because for wealth to provide a buffer against food insecurity, it must be “accessible or able to be borrowed against in order to smooth out any variations in income” (Carter *et al.* 2010, 606). Illustrating this point, a BBC news article details how a firmly middle-class family ran out of ways to pay for food following the loss of their breadwinner’s job in the 2007 global financial crisis, before managing to sell their house and car (Cacciottolo 2010).

### 3.1.3 Debt

Debt contributes to food insecurity because servicing debt reduces the income available for food purchasing. In Aotearoa New Zealand, debt is a “main reason” for people needing to use a food bank, and can be incurred to pay “for basic utilities such as electricity, gas or telephone” (NZCCSS 2008, 5). Debt might be incurred for any number of reasons, but Cox and Black (2011, 8), examining income and expenditure in the Waikato, concluded that debt is being taken on to cover the gap between income and the costs of living: “Debt is not a choice, it’s a given”.

### 3.1.4 Cost of Living

#### Food

The cost of food affects how much food and which foods households can access (Bowers *et al.* 2009, 12; Smith 2011, 21). In 2012, the *New Zealand Herald* asserted that “New Zealanders are now paying some of the world's highest prices for basic foods such as milk, chicken and eggs”, based on the newspaper’s international comparisons (Edmunds 2012). An indication of widespread concern in New Zealand about the price of food is reflected in a *Statistics New Zealand* webpage explaining ‘The rising cost of food in New Zealand’ (Statistics New Zealand 2008), and the initiation of a Parliamentary Inquiry into the price of milk in 2011 (Smith 2011, 19).

#### Housing Costs

In New Zealand housing is “a major expense” for households, which can constrain the ability to access food (Wynd 2009, 2). Housing is “consistently” the largest budget item for low-income households, and is usually the first thing to be paid for, with the amount of money remaining affecting “the quality of other essential goods and services”, including food (Waldegrave,

Stephens, and King 2003, 215). Uttley (1997, 88) wrote that “food banks are concerned about the impact of housing costs on food security” in New Zealand. Housing costs are also a major factor contributing to food insecurity in other countries, such as Canada and the USA (Miko and Thompson 2004, 2; Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2007, 1464; 2011).

This is a topic that has received some attention in the news media. A 2013 *Herald* article emphasised the impact of housing costs on food security (McCracken 2013). One 2014 article in *The Herald on Sunday* headlined ‘Rising living costs take shine off food price drop’ (Theunissen 2014). Based mainly on data from *Statistics New Zealand*, the article notes that rent – a housing cost – remains high, and quotes *Mangere Budgeting Services* chief executive Darryl Evans as explaining that some households spend 60 - 65 percent of income on rent (Theunissen 2014).

Another 2014 *Herald* article, reporting on an OECD report which noted a rise in food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, pointed to “low real incomes and high housing costs” in the country as a reason for the 17.2% of New Zealanders who were found to ‘not have enough money for food needed in the past year’ (Collins 2014, n.p.). Supporting this idea, a study in Oregon, USA found that high housing costs do not independently increase the chances of food insecurity; rather, food insecurity is contributed by the “interplay between low income and high rent” (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 8).

#### Expenses and Behaviour

The common accusation of ‘lifestyle choices’ as the cause of economic hardship among people who rely on welfare payments to survive tends to focus, as has already been mentioned, on ‘inappropriate’ behaviour. For instance, problem gambling and drug use may be factors in causing the financial difficulty which brings about household food insecurity (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 5). Other frequently suggested behavioural deficits are poor budgeting and cooking skills (Bowers *et al.* 2009; Gorton *et al.* 2010; Smith 2011). However, where household income is inadequate to purchase sufficient healthy food, no amount of skills training, or education, or lack of vices, can make it adequate (Bowers *et al.* 2009; Else 1999; Gorton *et al.* 2010); there is only so far that a budget can stretch.

#### Elasticity of Food Budget

The elasticity of the food budget has been noted as a vital dynamic in food insecurity across economically developed countries (Coleman-Jensen 2011; Craig and Dowler 1997; Frank,



Neault, Skalicky, Cook, Wilson, Levenson, Meyers, Heeren, Cutts, Casey, Black, and Berkowitz 2006; Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2007, 2011; Riches 1997a, b, d; Smith 2011; Turrell 1996; Uttley 1997; Wynd 2009). The food budget is drawn from the money remaining after inelastic fixed costs – such as rent, electricity and fuel bills – have been paid. Other ongoing and unexpected costs are also drawn from this money, such as medical bills, clothing, and education.

Thus, the amount of money available to purchase access to food depends on other costs faced by households. The food budget is often the first to suffer when income is insufficient; it is possible to alter spending on food week by week, whereas the budget for rent cannot be squeezed to allow for other spending. Craig and Dowler (1997, 126) call this “effective demand”, a result of the fact that “food purchasing decisions are made in a context of competing demands for scarce resources” (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2011, 285).

The elasticity of the household food budget brings a complex interrelation of factors to bear on food insecurity, reinforcing the complex ‘managed’ nature of household food insecurity. It also indicates why poverty and economic hardship are so strongly related to food insecurity: less income means less ability to cope with the costs of living, expected and unexpected.

### 3.1.5 Employment

Gorton, Bullen, and Ni Mhurchu (2010) remark that the link between food insecurity and income predicts a similar relationship with employment. Unemployment has been found to be associated with increased likelihood of food insecurity, while regular employment is likely to decrease food insecurity (Gorton *et al.* 2010). In Aotearoa New Zealand, “being unemployed and actively looking for work” is strongly related to food insecurity (Carter *et al.* 2010, 604).

However, being employed “may not be sufficient to protect against food insecurity” (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 5; see also Smith 2011, 103). Coleman-Jensen (2011) found that ‘nonstandard work’ – that is, working in multiple jobs, with varied hours, or part-time – by the head of household make a household more likely to be food insecure compared to households with a head in a stable full time job, with income and other social demographic characteristics controlled for. The instability in income and changing or complex household schedules due to variable or multiple job schedules both may contribute to household food insecurity (Coleman-Jensen 2011).

### 3.1.6 Beneficiaries

Receipt of various forms of state-administered welfare or social security is associated with food insecurity across developed countries (see for example in Australia: Burns 2004; in Canada: Tarasuk 2001b; in the USA: Townsend, Pearson, Love, Achterberg, and Murphy 2001). In New Zealand, the *SoFIE* data shows that 48.5 percent of food insecure households had received a means-tested benefit in the previous 12 months, while only 12 percent had not received a benefit payment (Carter *et al.* 2010).

Research for the Ministry of Social Development in 1995 found that people who use food banks are “predominantly income support beneficiaries” (Mackay 1995, n.p.). The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) note that most food bank users have welfare payments as their sole income (2008). Smith’s (2011) study found that 64 percent of participants with welfare payments as their main source of income were food insecure. The strength of the relationship between beneficiary status and food insecurity is likely to be a function of the low level of income from welfare payments, and the conditions of eligibility to receive that income – lacking income and wealth, being in need of financial assistance.

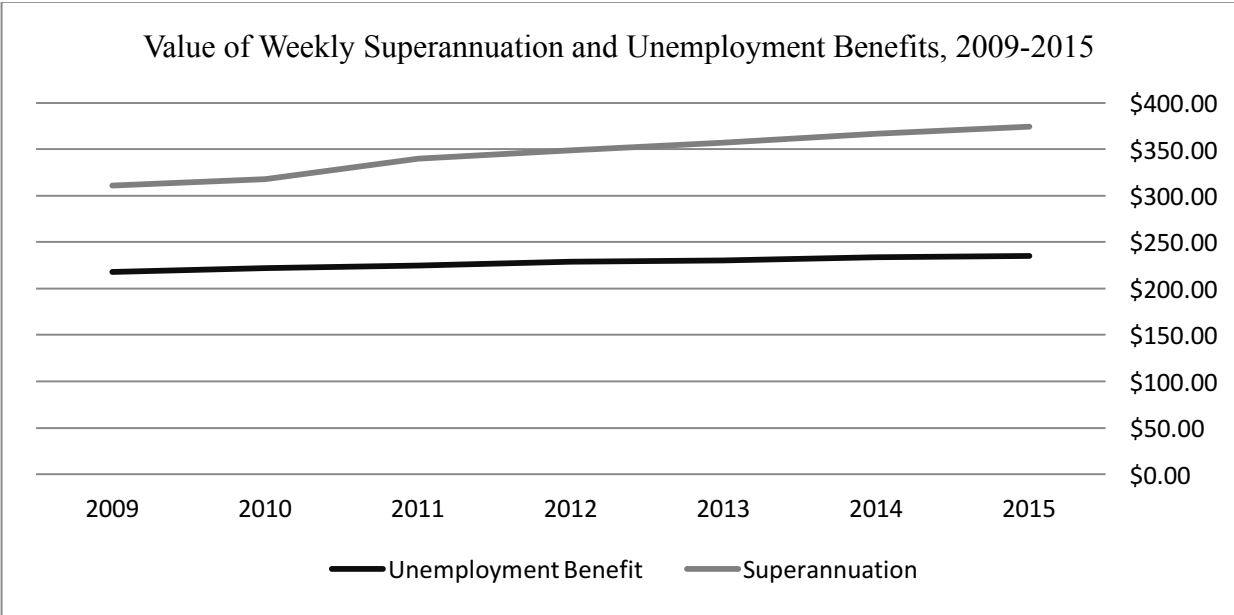
### 3.1.7 Age

Households do not have an age of their own, but the factor remains relevant here. There have been no New Zealand studies examining the relationship between the age of the head of the household and food insecurity. In the USA, households headed by someone over 60 years old were found to be less likely to be food insecure (households can be one person, or a couple) (Rose *et al.* 1998). However, higher rates of food insecurity have been found among the elderly in the USA in winter (Nord and Kantor 2006 in Smith 2011), and in general (Parker 1992), indicating that the elderly can be vulnerable to food insecurity.

In New Zealand, *SoFIE* data show that only 6.2 percent of individuals aged 65 and older are food insecure, compared to 24.6 percent of people aged 25-34 and 21.9 percent of people aged 35-44 (Carter *et al.* 2010). As a group, the elderly are not particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Rose (1999) suggests two reasons that the elderly may be less vulnerable to food insecurity: having life-savings to fall back on in times of financial stress, and not having ongoing housing costs, where a mortgage has been paid off.

Another strong explanatory factor in New Zealand is that superannuation rates are tied to average wage levels, following legislation intended to safeguard superannuates’ standard of

living (New Zealand Government 2001, see sections 15-16; Dickson and White 2008). Households made up of pensioners are therefore less likely to be food insecure. Pensioners also have relatively low food consumption (Dickson and White 2008), meaning that their food budget may be smaller before food insecurity is suffered.



**Figure 2: Weekly New Zealand superannuation and unemployment benefit levels, 2009-2015. Data sourced from: Work and Income (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015)**

In Aotearoa New Zealand, food insecurity has been found to be “most prevalent in early- to mid-adulthood when expenses for shelter (accommodation and clothes) and children’s needs for health and education compete for resources for food” (Parnell *et al.* 2001, 144). In addition, younger- to middle-aged New Zealanders might be expected to have lower incomes than those nearing the end of their careers (Carter *et al.* 2010).

### 3.1.8 Large Household

The more members a household has, the more is consumed, so the household budget has to go further (Rose 1999, 519S). In Aotearoa New Zealand, households with seven or more members, and those with five or more children, were more likely to “report that they could afford to eat properly only *Sometimes*” than smaller households (Ministry of Health 2003, 109, emphasis in original). “Families with larger numbers of children” are disproportionately represented among food bank users (Mackay 1995, n.p.).

Although there may be some economies of scale in purchasing food for a large household (Rose *et al.* 1998), providing for many people, particularly children, is a burden which many

households' incomes struggle to support. In New Zealand, approximately half of food bank users come from households which include children (NZCCSS 2008). Children are unlikely to be contributing to household income, while still consuming household resources.

### *3.1.9 Sole Parent Family / Household Structure*

Another aspect of households which is associated with food insecurity is household structure – specifically, the number of adults present to attend to children. In the USA, female sole parent households are more likely to be food insufficient than any other household structure, even when other household characteristics are controlled for (Alaimo et al. 1998 in Coleman-Jensen 2011). Jabs *et al.* (2007) found that the lack of a partner to help with household activities was an added barrier to preparing home-cooked meals for children for female single parents in the USA (in Coleman-Jensen 2011). This is supported by research in the USA suggesting that female single parent households where a non-resident father visits the children more frequently are less likely to experience food insecurity (Garasky and Stewart 2007 in Coleman-Jensen 2011).

In New Zealand, sole parent households are far more likely to suffer food insecurity. 37.2 percent of all sole parent households compared to 15 percent of households with a couple and children, and 44.4 percent of female sole parent households were found to be food insecure (Carter *et al.* 2010). Coleman-Jensen (2011) points out that household structure interacts with the head of households' form of work – irregular shifts, night shifts etc. – to affect food insecurity. Child care may be required, adding another cost to the household budget (Rose 1999).

## **3.2 Physical Factors**

The level to which difficulties in physical access constitute a factor in food insecurity for New Zealanders is not clear for two reasons. First, only a limited amount of small-scale research has addressed this question. Second, this research has had inconsistent findings. This section includes a review of transport, household facilities and health as factors that influence physical access to food.

### *3.2.1 Transport*

Access to sufficient food in economically developed countries can be restricted by both physical and financial factors (Dowler and O'Connor 2012). A study of residents in Adelaide,

Australia living in- and outside of ‘food deserts’ – areas without retail outlets which stock healthy foods, generally in economically deprived urban areas – found that physical access to food depended more on access to private transport in the car-centric city than the geographic distance to food shops (Coveney and O’Dwyer 2009). The problem of sufficient food access for those living in ‘food deserts’ is not a major issue in Aotearoa New Zealand (Pearce, Day, and Witten 2008).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, physical access has been identified as a barrier to accessing food in some areas, particularly for rural communities (Woodhouse 1999; Else 1999), though other research has not found physical access to be a significant issue (Smith 2011 ). It does not seem controversial to claim that geographic variation determines the importance of physical access as a factor in food insecurity in New Zealand.

### *3.2.2 Household Facilities*

#### **Kitchen**

Having unsuitable housing facilities for food is related to food insecurity (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 18; Smith 2011). The lack of basic facilities such as ovens, refrigerators and freezers can ‘severely restrict’ food access and management (Smith 2011). The lack of good food storage facilities limits the extent to which bulk-buying can be used to minimise food costs (Gorton *et al.* 2010; Smith 2011).

#### **Gardens**

Growing food at home or in a community gardens does not eliminate food insecurity. Some studies have found that growing fruit and vegetables at home can improve household nutrient intake, while others have found no association between these (Smith 2011, 72). Simply having more food in the house from a home garden is not necessarily associated with food security (Gorton *et al.* 2010). The usefulness of a garden for reducing financial pressures on food purchasing is limited by in-season produce often being the cheapest to purchase product at the time anyway, making savings minimal (Gorton *et al.* 2010).

Having a small supply of fruit or vegetables from a garden does not mean that a household will not be food insecure. Else (1999, 18) provides an example from Aotearoa New Zealand: “In Stratford, 78% of the people coming to the food bank already grew fruit or vegetables at home”. Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand commonly includes not only to quality but

also to quantity of food – shortages of non-fruit and vegetable staples, such as milk, bread, breakfast cereal, and meat (Bowers *et al.* 2009).

### 3.2.3 Health

Ill health or disability have been associated with difficulty in physically accessing food stores (Gorton *et al.* 2010). Poor mental health is associated with food insecurity, though the direction of association between many aspects of physical and mental health and food insecurity is unclear (Gorton *et al.* 2010).

## 3.3 Sociocultural Factors

A wide range of sociocultural factors are associated with food insecurity. Factors reviewed in this section include a person's ethnicity, gender, 'life skills' such as cooking, education, their situation within cultural and social networks, and embarrassment. While these are characteristics of individuals rather than households, these factors remain relevant. Two reasons for this are where a household is homogenous – such as a shared ethnicity – and where a factor seems to interact with other factors – such as female-headed sole parent households being more likely to be food insecure than male-headed sole parent households.

### 3.3.1 Ethnicity

Seven of the eight Māori participants in Smith's (2011) research experienced food insecurity. Ethnicity as a factor in food insecurity seems likely to be linked to income. Adjusting variables in analysis of New Zealand data from the *SoFIE* removes the association of food insecurity and Pacific ethnicity, showing that another factor is associated with both Pacific ethnicity and likelihood of being food insecure (Carter *et al.* 2010). It seems likely that this factor is income, because of the disparity in incomes between ethnic groups in New Zealand. This idea is supported by income data: the *New Zealand Income Survey: June 2013 quarter* showed that the average weekly income for people aged 15 and over was \$793 for European, \$591 for Māori, and \$486 for Pacific peoples (MacPherson 2013).

### 3.3.2 Gender

Females are more likely to be food insecure than males in Aotearoa New Zealand. The difference is considerable. 2004/5 *SOFIE* data shows that 19 percent of females were food insecure compared to 12 percent of males (Carter *et al.* 2010). Within gender, there are significant differences between ethnic groups (Parnell *et al.* 2001). The discrepancy in the

relative rates of food insecurity between women and men has several possible reasons. It has been repeatedly found that parents, especially mothers, go without food, or eat less, in order for their children to eat more (Bhattacharya *et al.* 2004; Coates *et al.* 2006; Dowler and O'Connor 2012; McIntyre, Glanville, Raine, Dayle, Anderson, and Battaglia 2003; Smith 2011; Uttley 1997). Women are more likely than men to be the single parent in single-parent households – making up 84.2 percent of such households, according to the 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand 2014a). Women earn less income than men – \$788 compared to \$1,115 average weekly earnings in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand 2014b). Finally, recipients of the Domestic Purposes Benefit are “more likely to be female (88.0%), aged 25-39 years (46.4%) and caring for a child under 6 years (51.4%)” (NZCCSS 2013, 6). In general, being female appears to be strongly associated with the presence of other factors associated with suffering food insecurity.

### 3.3.3 Cooking and Budgeting Skills

Shopping and cooking healthy food on a budget requires a level of budgeting and cooking skill (Gorton *et al.* 2010). While having low self-rated cooking skills has been found to be associated with food insecurity, such a lack of skills has not been found to be especially prevalent among low-income households (Gorton *et al.* 2010). A recent New Zealand-specific study reported that “[f]ew behaviours were found to be associated with food security status or income group” (Smith 2011, iii). Smith (2011, 33) also notes that recent initiatives in Aotearoa New Zealand which seek to promote these skills “appear to be focused on improving ‘nutrition security’ and few are addressing fundamental financial barriers to achieving food security”.

Bowers *et al.* (2009, 68) note that “cooking skills programmes have potential to influence diet” but suggest that:

Cooking skills classes should also be framed within the context of the true causes of food insecurity. Food insecurity is not primarily caused by a lack of individual cooking skills, but is mainly a problem of insufficient access to food and resources. Thus, cooking skills classes might help with issues of food insecurity, but they will not remove the cause. [...T]hey could be a valuable component of a multi-faceted and multi-level intervention to enhance food security[...]

The same could be said for interventions targeting budgeting skills. Smith (2011, 24) found that weekly food budgets were “more prevalent among the medium-income group (73%) compared to the high (52%) and low-income groups (58%)”. This is likely to be because middle-income

households have a range of fixed expenditures – bills, mortgage payments – which require spending restraint, while high-income households place less of a priority on food budgeting, and low-income households may not put aside set amounts for food each week because of the elasticity of the food budget (Smith 2011). Households' spending on food is “considered flexible and may have to be restrained or increased depending on other demands on their money that week” (Smith 2011, 105).

Smith also found that food insecure households “were less likely to plan meals ahead of time (61%) compared to food-secure households (79%)”, and suggests two possible reasons for this (2011, 105). Food insecure households may have their ability to plan ahead compromised; their food supply is insecure (Smith 2011). Alternately, planning ahead may not be necessary, if the food bought is very similar from week to week out of necessity (Smith 2011). Concerning food preparation, Smith (2011, 106) points out that “[c]ooking from scratch to keep food costs down may not be achievable in reality for most families”, given other demands on time.

Food purchasing decisions are another dimension of household access to food, and are made “within a complex maze of interrelated factors and trade-offs”, including economic and physical access and the particular household context (Smith 2011, 112). Some evidence suggests that fruit and vegetable purchases are the most responsive to increases in income (Smith 2011). On the other hand, fruit and vegetables have been found to be “both price- and income-inelastic”, meaning that decreases in price and increases in income, respectively, prompt an increase in the amount purchased of less than the percentage of the price change (Bowers *et al.* 2009, 17). Hopgood *et al.* (2010, 256) found that both parents and children in New Zealand are aware of the importance of eating healthy food, and consumption below “adequate levels” implies that other barriers exist, such as cost.

Turrell (1996, 617) found that households with welfare payments as the main source of income showed “limited compliance with dietary recommendations”, and that this “was not a function of the availability, accessibility or affordability of recommended food”. Finding that an explanation for socio-economic variation in food choice did not lie in structural, material or economic factors, Turrell (1996, 617) suggests that “social-psychological and subcultural factors (beliefs, attitudes and knowledge) account for the differences”. It is possible that ‘food cultures’, perhaps moulded by historic poverty inform food choices.



### *3.3.4 Education*

There is mixed evidence of links between educational level and food insecurity; several studies have found an associating, adjusting for other factors, while several have found no such link (Gorton *et al.* 2010). In New Zealand, the *SoFIE* data does not show a clear association between food insecurity and education (Bowers *et al.* 2009). Gorton and colleagues suggest that the “weight of evidence” supports a link between a level of education lower than completing high school and reduced food security (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 24).

### *3.3.5 Cultural History and Obligations*

The loss of indigenous resources as a result of colonialism has been identified as a problem in both New Zealand and the USA (Gorton *et al.* 2010). The remittance of money to Pacific Islands has been identified as affecting the food security of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand (Gorton *et al.* 2010). Contributions to funeral/tangi costs are a possible cost for Māori people, drawing on the household budget (Gorton *et al.* 2010).

### *3.3.6 Social Networks*

In the USA, social capital has been found to be inversely associated with household food insecurity (Gorton *et al.* 2010). In particular, reciprocity between neighbours appears to be strongly related to food security (Gorton *et al.* 2010).

### *3.3.7 Embarrassment*

Several studies have found that many people feel ashamed about using food banks (Tarasuk and Eakin 2005). This “may particularly be the case in smaller communities” (McPherson 2006, 43).

Eighty four percent of the 153 women interviewed by Tarasuk and Beaton (1990, 112) “described feeling shame, embarrassment, degradation, and humiliation” on their first visit to a food bank. Pride can stop households of any ethnicity asking for help, though one study suggested that Māori and Pacific households may be less likely to use food banks for this reason (Gorton *et al.* 2010; McPherson 2006).

## **3.4 Political Factors**

Gorton *et al.* (2010, 23) note that factors in food insecurity such as income and immigration are “influenced by politics” and single out government policies which impact on the level of food

bank usage and welfare support. Government policies that have been linked with increased food bank usage, and so indirectly with food insecurity, include:

taxation reforms, introduction of a goods and services tax (or a value added tax), cuts in welfare payments, restructuring of the public and private sector, labor market [sic] reforms (moving to individual versus collective employment contracts), and housing policy (New Zealand went through a period of charging market rents for state houses for low income families instead of income-related rents), as well as changes in the general standard of living. (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 23)

The links between the weakening of support offered by the welfare state and increases in food bank use have been noted across rich liberal democracies, including Aotearoa New Zealand (Wynd 2005; Uttley 1997), Australia (Booth and Whelan 2014), the UK (Lambie-Mumford 2014) and Canada (Riches 1986; Tarasuk, Dachner, and Loopstra 2014). Observations of increases in food bank clients near the end of the welfare payment cycle indicates that it is not uncommon for welfare support to run out before the next payment is due (Riches 1986).

The daunting administrative processes involved in claiming special needs grants for food from the welfare system in Aotearoa New Zealand and beneficiaries' lack of knowledge about their existence may add to food insecurity, though attempts made to remedy these have been made (Gorton *et al.* 2010). In addition, the number of these grants available to a citizen is limited and their size and eligibility criteria are not regularly indexed to food costs (McNeill 2011).

The factors identified in this chapter are environmental influences: they influence the environment in which individuals take action and are either food secure or food insecure. As environmental influences, they interact with each other. Indeed, political factors associated with food insecurity might be considered to be manifest only through their interaction with or influence on economic organisation, physical realities and sociocultural situations.

This chapter provides a base of empirical evidence, upon which the more theoretically informed accounts of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand in Chapters 4 and 5 are built. As I have argued, the empirical data reviewed so far in this thesis strongly suggests the primary importance of structural drivers in the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also clear that the (social) scientific evidence overwhelmingly opposes the position generally taken by right-wing politicians concerning food insecurity in rich liberal democracies, described in section 1.2.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) focuses on the structures of the neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand. I argue that these drive vulnerability to food insecurity for particular groups. That is, a specific political rationality influences physical realities and economic organisation, which interact with sociocultural situations, to form an environment in which particular groups of people are vulnerability to food insecurity. In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5), I build on this structural theorisation of food insecurity through the lens of the political economy of neoliberalism with a more recent theorisation of neoliberalism as a post-structural as well as structural phenomenon.

## Chapter 4 – Patterns in Suffering: A Structural Account of the Production of Vulnerability by Neoliberal Political Economy

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction	Causes for concern	Associated factors	A structural explanation	A post-structural explanation
Vulnerability	Patterns in vulnerability	Neoliberalism & neoliberalisation	Vulnerability to food insecurity	The Space of Vulnerability

“in a land rich in food resources this is a man-made need”.

- People’s Select Committee (1992) in Uttley (1997, 80)

Clay (1981), writing about food insecurity in economically developing countries, observed that as “a human problem”, food insecurity is “primarily one of the welfare *vulnerability* of distinct categories of people within the population” (in Maxwell and Smith 1992, 10). Clay’s description is rather dated and concerns countries compared to which Aotearoa New Zealand is better-off, both materially and in the national imagination. However, I argue that this claim about vulnerability still characterises well the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand today. The operation of the neoliberal political economy in this country creates structural conditions that resemble aspects of economic life in developing economies.

I will first argue that the factors contributing to food insecurity identified in the previous chapter emerge in consistent patterns, supporting the theorisation of structural influence(s) in rich liberal democracies that drive vulnerability to food insecurity for particular groups. I will then argue that these structural influences are associated with neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand that emerged as an aspect of the neoliberal turn across rich liberal democracies in the 1980s. The effects and the timing of structural political economic reforms support this interpretation of the evidence presented in Chapter 3. I will then offer a brief account of the neoliberal turn in Aotearoa New Zealand. This provides some context for the final argument of this chapter – that the structures of the neoliberal political economy affect the vulnerability to food insecurity of groups of citizens.

## 4.1 Vulnerability

I want to use the idea of vulnerability as a term as it can capture a multiplicity of the kinds of structural dynamics, pertinent when considering people experiencing food insecurity, that were summarised in the previous chapter. Vulnerability, as a term, captures that way that food insecurity is a status, rather than an economic position, a capacity, or a social relationship. Many households that suffer food insecurity tend not to do so constantly, or for long periods. In the USA, Nord, Andrews, and Winicki (2002, 197) found that:

about one third experienced the condition as occasional or episodic – occurring in only 1 or 2 months. Two thirds experienced the condition as recurring – occurring in 3 or more months. The latter group includes a subset... that experienced the condition as frequent or chronic – occurring in almost every month.

The results of the *2008/09 NZ Adult Nutrition Survey* support the operation of this trend in Aotearoa New Zealand. Where participants' responses indicated food insecurity (e.g. did not respond 'Always' to the statement 'The household can afford to eat properly', or did not respond 'never' to the statement 'Because of money, the household runs out of food'), most of these responses were 'sometimes' – rather than 'never' or 'often', depending on the statement (University of Otago and Ministry of Health 2011, 264-271). This trend suggests that many households that suffer food insecurity are quite vulnerable to food insecurity, and so are sometimes food insecure. Other households are much less vulnerable to food insecurity, and so do not suffer it, or only suffer it in extraordinary circumstances.

The major difference between the households more and less vulnerable to food insecurity is their level of income. Watts and Bohle (1993, 117-118) observe that "[p]oor people are usually among the most vulnerable by definition", but that "not all poor people are equally vulnerable to hunger; indeed it is not necessarily the poorest who face the greatest risk". It is apparent from the empirical research reviewed in Chapter 3 that there is a strong relationship between food insecurity and economic hardship. In Aotearoa New Zealand, levels of food insecurity decrease proportionately to increases in socioeconomic status (Carter *et al.* 2010). However, this relationship is not straightforward, and "a one-to-one correspondence between poverty-level incomes and hunger does not exist" (Rose 1999, 517S).

The use of the concept of vulnerability in this thesis draws on Watts and Bohle's *Hunger, Famine and the Space of Vulnerability* (1993). Their theorisation is oriented towards the escalation of food insecurity into famine in economically developing countries. While much of

the framework they construct is usefully applicable to household food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, some contextual detail requires revision. One of these is the starting point of the paper, Sen and Drèze's (1989) concept of 'entitlements' to food – a person or household's ability to command food. In rich liberal democracies, the primary way that entitlements are gained is through participation in markets. Money is earned in a labour market, and food is bought in a food (commodity) market. Liberal democracies have long embraced capitalist markets, so it should be noted that this market-based system is not a function of neoliberal political economy.

Drawing on the work of Chambers (1989), Watts and Bohle define vulnerability in terms of three "basic co-ordinates":

1. The risk of exposure to crises, stress and shocks,
2. The risk of inadequate capacities to cope with stress, crises and shocks,
3. The risk of severe consequences of, and the attendant risks of slow or limited recovery (resiliency) from crises, risk and shocks. (1993, 118)

Consequently, the concept of vulnerability is useful in the context of this thesis in two main ways. First, it allows for a relationship between neoliberal structures of political economy and food insecurity. It is clear from a significant body of research that such a relationship exists. Second, it allows for this relationship to be not linear or one-to-one. Watts and Bohle note that, despite the significance of income, "there are a multiplicity of other factors that co-determine whether an individual will go hungry" (1993, 117). The concept of vulnerability allows for the contribution of these 'other factors' to food insecurity, as well as the 'managed' nature of food insecurity as people act to get by in their circumstances. Therefore, the notion of vulnerability can be said to accommodate complexity and consistency in the relationship between a household's income and its ability to access food.

The *2008 New Zealand Living Standards Survey* found that there is "a strong relationship" between living standards and financial position in Aotearoa New Zealand, and that there is "considerable variation in living standards among those in similar financial circumstances" (Ministry of Social Development 2009, 139-140). Vulnerability explains this 'considerable variation' as occurring due to differing experiences of exposure to crisis, differing capacities to cope when exposed, and differing ability to recover from exposure. Importantly, this last dynamic feeds into the ability to cope with the next crisis or shock. The concept of vulnerability also fits with Rose's (1999, 517S) finding that households with insufficient food are "much

more likely” than households with sufficient food to “have experienced recent events that stress household budgets, such as losing a job, gaining a household member or losing food stamps”.

This understanding of vulnerability to food insecurity suggests that “the prescriptive and normative response to vulnerability is to reduce exposure, enhance coping capacity, strengthen recovery potential and bolster damage control (ie minimize destructive consequences [sic]) via private and public means” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 118). Later in this chapter, I will argue that structures of neoliberal political economy increase vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand by achieving the opposite of these measures by operating to minimise the incomes of the least rewarded people in society.

## **4.2 Consistency in Structuring Vulnerability**

The consistency of many factors associated with food insecurity across rich liberal democracies and over time is remarkable. I argue that these consistencies amount to distinct patterns in suffering, indicating structural influences on who is vulnerable to food insecurity in rich liberal democracies. That is, the regularities in factors contributing to food insecurity – income level, gender, ethnicity, household structure – exist because of the consistency of structures within which people live. I will also argue that the structures most significant to the regularities in factors are political economic structures – structures that influence, organise and create the economic, physical, socio-cultural and political environments within which individuals act and households have or do not have access to sufficient nutritious food.

The results of a bivariate analysis of the *Survey of Family, Income and Employment* (SoFIE) will be repeated here for the sake of comparison. The eight-year (2002-2010) longitudinal study found that New Zealanders are more likely to be food insecure if they are: female; younger- to middle-aged (25-44 years); legally unmarried; of Māori or Pacific ethnicity; living in a sole parent family; living in a household with multiple people (flatting) or multiple families; unemployed or actively looking for work; renting their accommodation; living in highly deprived areas; or if they received some form of means tested government benefit in the past 12 months or have low household income and wealth (Carter *et al.* 2010; Bowers *et al.* 2009).

There are striking similarities with Canadian data from 1998-1999, which shows that people are more likely to be food insecure if they are: female; aged 0-64; living in a sole-parent household (especially one headed by a female), or are an unattached individual; Aboriginal; renting their

accommodation; divorced or separated, with a partner but not married, or single; or if they immigrated within the previous nine years, have a low or middle household income, or have a government transfer as their major source of income (Che and Chen 2001). Similarly, US data from 2004 showed that people are more likely to be food insecure if they: have a household income below the official poverty line; live in a sole-parent household (especially one headed by a female); live in a Black or Hispanic household; or live in principal cities of metropolitan areas (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2005).

Riches (1997e) calls attention to the similarities between food insecurity in the case study countries in his book *First World Hunger: Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand*. Silvasti and Riches (2014, 193) argue that “little has changed” since this analysis: growing income inequality, as well as lost food sovereignty for indigenous ethnic populations, and a “combination of labour market failure and tightening social security policy” are common themes across ‘rich societies’ with food insecure citizens.

Across rich liberal democracies and across time there are similarities in demographic factors associated with food insecurity. It is apparent from the limited comparison here, and the analysis of the two editions of *First World Hunger* (Riches 1997c; Riches and Silvasti 2014), that particular demographic groups, in the context of the environment and structures of rich liberal democracies, consistently suffer food insecurity more than others. That is, they are consistently more vulnerable to suffering food insecurity. These groups are ‘low income’ for household income level; ‘female’ for gender; ‘Indigenous’ or minority for ethnicity, and ‘sole-parent’ (especially female-headed) for household structure.

If these consistencies show the influence of structural drivers of vulnerability to food insecurity in rich liberal democracies, I argue that they represent patterns of disadvantage in the context of the structures of neoliberal political economy. The next section will offer an explanation for this argument.

#### **4.3 A Turn Towards Vulnerability: Connecting Neoliberal Reform and Food Insecurity**

The remainder of this chapter offers support for theorising structures of neoliberal political economy as the structures that underlie the regularities in patterns of vulnerability and suffering described in the previous section – that is, as the structures that shape vulnerability to food



insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The focus on structures of neoliberal political economy here is supported by two things in particular: the emergence of food insecurity as a concern within the group of rich liberal democracies following the neoliberal turn in the 1980s; and the major significance of economic factors in contributing to food insecurity, as detailed in Chapter 3.

The historical emergence of food insecurity as a concern in academic literature ‘at home’ in rich liberal democracies from the 1980s occurred in the wake of neoliberalisation in these countries. Neoliberalisation, which will be detailed in the next section (4.4), refers to the development of the structures of neoliberal political economy through social and economic policy reforms, changes facilitated by global and local events in the 1970s. This sequence of events is not a coincidence. Riches (1986) demonstrates the links between the rise of neo-conservative policies, the breakdown of the welfare system in Canada, and the subsequent increase in the number and activity of food banks in an effort to provide for newly vulnerable people. A similar pattern is observable across rich liberal democracies, though not simultaneously, as neoliberalisation unfolded at different paces and to differing extents in different countries.

Prior to concern about ‘First World hunger’ following the neoliberal turn, there had been concerns about the food supplies of these countries following the shortages and rationing of World War Two. Allen (2007, 19) argues that earlier, the belief that hunger is not inevitable “put the problem of hunger on the international agenda in 1933” and saw the USA institute food assistance programmes during the Depression, drawing on its agricultural surpluses. So, rich liberal democracies were not entirely unacquainted with household food insecurity; but the prosperous post-War decades were not marred by food insecurity, reflected in its not being an object of public nor academic concern.

In the 1980s, what had been a problem of ‘development’, external to rich liberal democracies, alarmingly transitioned to being one that now existed ‘at home’. This was a shock. When the charity Oxfam explored the need for an anti-poverty programme in the UK, it was accused of being “patronizing” and “insulting” (Craig and Dowler 1997, 115). The novel problem of ‘First World hunger’ - want in the midst of plenty - demands explanation. The structural account of this explanation is located in the reforms of the 1980s neoliberal turn in rich liberal democracies.

The nature of this explanation is demonstrated by Vozoris and Tarasuk (2003, 123) through the “tracking” of indicators of household food insecurity between their own and other Canadian studies, and of these with “other major indicators of poverty in Canada”. This observation can be applied more broadly; demographic factors associated with food insecurity can be thought of as markers of economic marginalisation. This can be seen in the overlap between factors associated with food insecurity and factors associated with economic hardship in Aotearoa New Zealand. For instance, the key findings of the *2008 New Zealand Living Standards Survey* were that people who suffer economic hardship most are sole parents, beneficiaries with children, Māori and Pacific people, and large families (four or more children) (Ministry of Social Development 2009, 2).

McLennan, Ryan, and Spoonley (2000, 150) observed that “[t]he profile of the poor tends not to vary too much from country to country, at least in the Western world”, mirroring the manifestation of factors associated with food insecurity across rich liberal democracies. They identify single-parent families, families with six or more children, work-poor households, poorly paid people, the elderly, and migrants and disadvantaged indigenous or ethnic minorities as consistently being the most likely to be poor in what I have termed rich liberal democracies (McLennan *et al.* 2000, 150).

I argue that structures of neoliberal political economy influence the vulnerability of some citizens to food insecurity because they increase, exacerbate, and intensify the economic marginalisation of particular groups in rich liberal democracies, including Aotearoa New Zealand. The households most likely to be poor are also those most likely to suffer food insecurity as well as those most likely to suffer material deprivation. The structures of neoliberal political economy are associated with vulnerability to food insecurity because they do not support incomes adequate to avoid vulnerability to food insecurity for the whole population<sup>15</sup>. This disproportionately affects certain groups, and so these groups are disproportionately vulnerable to food insecurity. These groups are described in the summary of data on the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.2)

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<sup>15</sup> McLennan *et al.* (2000) note that neoliberal political economy operates to the detriment of the incomes of not only low-income households, but also the middle-class (153). This coincides with reports of middle-class food insecurity in the UK (Cacciottolo 2010) and USA (Chen 2010) following the Global Financial Crisis and a wave of middle-class unemployment. Middle-class households are generally much less vulnerable to food insecurity than those with low incomes, but a sudden change in circumstances can rapidly make capacities to cope with stress, crises and shocks inadequate.

and in Chapter 3. The next section describes the structures of the neoliberal political economy in theory and as they exist in Aotearoa New Zealand.

#### **4.4 Neoliberalism and Neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand**

To revisit the arguments in this chapter so far: (1) food insecurity is a social condition with clear structural drivers; (2) the structures of neoliberal political economy embed the economic marginalisation of particular demographic groups in rich liberal democracies; and (3) subsequently, the neoliberal turn represents a decisive moment in the vulnerability of citizens to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this account of ‘First World hunger’, theories of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation are both relevant and necessary, though they may not be sufficient. This section will describe what a neoliberal turn is a turn towards and outline some key details of the neoliberal turn in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Broadly, neoliberalism refers to “forms of political-economic governance premised on the extension of market relationships” (Larner 2000, 5). Larner (2000, 6) distinguishes three interpretations of neoliberalism which have arisen in analyses of it, concerned to avoid “underestimating the significance of contemporary transformations in governance” by reducing it to structural elements only. This is an important point and the arguments in Chapter 5 do focus on the effects of neoliberal political rationality on social conduct, subjectivity and ways of thinking. Central to this chapter, though, is what Kelsey (1997) identifies as a structural adjustment programme.

A structural adjustment programme occurs through policy change. Larner (2000, 7) characterises the core values which inform the formation of neoliberal policy: “the individual; freedom of choice; market security; laissez faire, and minimal government”. These values support the primacy of market forces and rolling back the state, fundamental elements of neoliberal structural adjustment programmes (Kelsey 1997). Neoliberal structural adjustment programmes operate in line with the belief that “the social good will be maximised by maximising the reach and frequency of market transactions” (Harvey 2005, 12).

Neoliberalism thought conceives of “the market as the model for the state and for the overall organization of society” (Oksala 2011 in Foster, Kerr, and Byrne 2014, 231) and neoliberal structural adjustment programmes seek to actualise this theory. In pursuit of market forces delivering optimal social outcomes, structural adjustment involves the implementation of

deregulation, privatisation, low taxes and constrained government spending, and the ‘roll back’ of the structures of the welfare state (Larner 2000, 7).

A central feature of the neoliberal turn, as manifest in several rich liberal democracies, has been a “marked by a shift from Keynesian welfarism towards a political agenda favouring the relatively unfettered operation of markets” (Larner 2000, 6). Jessop (2002, 454) observes that “[t]he economic, social, and political measures pursued in support of the neoliberal project generally seem to involve a paradoxical increase in intervention”. This is of significant importance in Chapter 5.

Kelsey (1997, 85) gives a summary of the neoliberal turn in this country:

“New Zealand’s structural adjustment programme centred on five ‘fundamentals’: liberalisation of domestic markets and trade; reduction of the size and scope of the state; monetary policy, driven by an overriding goal of price stability; labour market deregulation and deunionisation of the workforce; and fiscal restraint, through broadening the tax base and cutting state spending and social support”.

There are two key elements in the neoliberal turn in Aotearoa New Zealand. The first is the broad economic context of Aotearoa New Zealand in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Of especial significance were the export implications of Britain’s joining the European Economic Community and “[e]xternal crises, notably the oil shocks, and the changing international economy [which] fed increasing demands for domestic and trade liberalisation” (Kelsey 1997; Roper 2005, 24).

The second is what Kelsey (1997) and Roper, (2005) explain as the initiation of the structural adjustment programme in Aotearoa New Zealand in a “policy coup” (Jesson in Roper 2005). That is, the “shift in policy-making from Keynesianism to neoliberalism” was a top-down initiative, driven by minority elites dominating Treasury, the Reserve Bank and Cabinet (Roper 2005, 177).

Both Kelsey and Roper remark on the anti-democratic nature of this shift. Parliamentary and policy-making procedures were twisted or ignored to rush through policy change (Kelsey 1997). Following the emergence of the structural adjustment programme, voting patterns and a change of electoral system by referendum illustrate that many, if not most, New Zealanders were hostile to the changes and that the new structures were widely unpopular (Kelsey 1997; Roper 2005). Roper (2005, 245) attributes this to the neoliberal policy regime having “a negative impact on the lives of the majority of New Zealanders”.

The regime of economic and social policies introduced in the structural adjustments and expanded and entrenched since then have increased poverty, deprivation, and inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand without delivering on their economic promise (Thomas 2014; Jessop 2002; Roper 2011). Income became “highly concentrated amongst the top 10 percent between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s” (Rashbrooke 2014, 136). Increasing income inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand since the neoliberal turn has increased the incidence of poverty in this country, as well as the severity of economic hardship (Rashbrooke 2013b).

The reasons for the longevity of the neoliberal policy regime, the “hard core” of which “remains firmly in place” (Roper 2005) are complex. They include business support for this regime which is made significant by the influence of business on parties and governments, high levels of national debt, legislation entrenching key features of the regime, and the support (at least until recently) of international agencies such as the IMF and OECD (Roper 2005). Furthermore, the country’s bureaucracy’s “institutional, political and ideological culture had been formed and informed by neoliberalism” (Kelsey 1997, 95). Chapter 5 will offer an explanation for support for this regime by the influence of neoliberal political rationality on citizens’ subjectivities.

#### **4.5 Vulnerability to Food Insecurity as a Structural Effect of Neoliberal Political Economy**

In this section, I explain how structures of neoliberal political economy increase vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Generally speaking, these structures decrease the capacity of some people to cope with shocks or stress, and increase the shocks and stresses they experience, through supporting downwards pressure on the incomes of the least-rewarded people. This could be called economic marginalisation or the development of financial disadvantage by structures of neoliberal political economy, and it increases and intensifies vulnerability to food insecurity. The financial consequences of structures of neoliberal political economy are *strictures* on the quality of life of groups of people in society.

##### ***4.5.1 Structures as Strictures: Political Economy and Vulnerability to Food Insecurity***

Economic marginalisation is significant to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand because, as in other rich liberal democracies, the normal way to access food is to buy it. That is, food

security is usually achieved through participation in markets. Dowler and O'Connor (2012, 45) contextualise the definition of food security for rich liberal democracies:

‘food security’ implies that people have sufficient money to purchase the food they want to eat, to meet social as well as health and nutritional norms; that this money is not absorbed in other expenditure demands (rent, fuel, debt repayment, etc.); that people can reach shops or markets which stock appropriate food at affordable prices, or they can grow or otherwise obtain food in ways which are dignified and in keeping with social norms.

Williams and Dowler reinforce that fact that access to food requires both the availability of food and the means to access it (in Craig and Dowler 1997). This is a re-phrasing of Sen’s notion of entitlements: “‘food poverty and insecurity’ are not necessarily the result of supply failures; they are caused by diminished or failed entitlements to access food” (Drèze and Sen 1989 in Dowler and O’Connor 2012, 45). Again, in rich liberal democracies, such access is a financial matter. In line with this idea, Riches (1997a, 57) observes that “[p]eople are not going hungry in Canada because there is no food, but rather because they lack the necessary income to access it through normal channels such as supermarkets and food stores. Food is not equally available to all”. The same is true in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The links between structures of neoliberal political economy and vulnerability to food insecurity in rich liberal democracies are described in the literature. Riches (1986) maps the relationship between neoconservative policies and the “breakdown of the public safety net” in Canada in the early 1980s (101), linking the policy regime to negative social consequences, and these to the rise of food banks as a major response to the rapid growth of hunger. These relationships can be generalised to other rich liberal democracies. Indeed, the links between the weakening of welfare support and rises in food bank use have been noted in Aotearoa New Zealand (Wynd 2005; Uttley 1997). O’Brien (2014) offers some detail:

Any discussion of food security, hunger and nutritional inadequacy in New Zealand needs to be placed within the framework of growing inequality and poverty which has shaped so much economic and social policy in this country over the last 25 years. ... A significant contributing cause of growing inequality and poverty has been the reforms to social security since the benefit cuts in 1991 and the subsequent failure by governments to increase benefit rates, other than regular increases reflecting changes in the Consumer Price Index. (2014, 103)

The cross-national comparative analysis of rich liberal democracies in the first edition of *First World Hunger* (Riches 1997c):

exposes the intertwined character of neo-liberal social and public policy... Harshening and constantly more punitive welfare reform policies aimed at disciplining labour, put into practice by cutting and freezing benefits and/or tightening the rules of eligibility for allowances, not only intensified but also produced food poverty. (Silvasti and Riches 2014, 191)

Analysis in the book's second edition, covering a wider range of countries, "further exposes the deepening and damaging impacts of ever stronger neo-liberal economic ideology on the most vulnerable people in the rich world" (Silvasti and Riches 2014, 193).

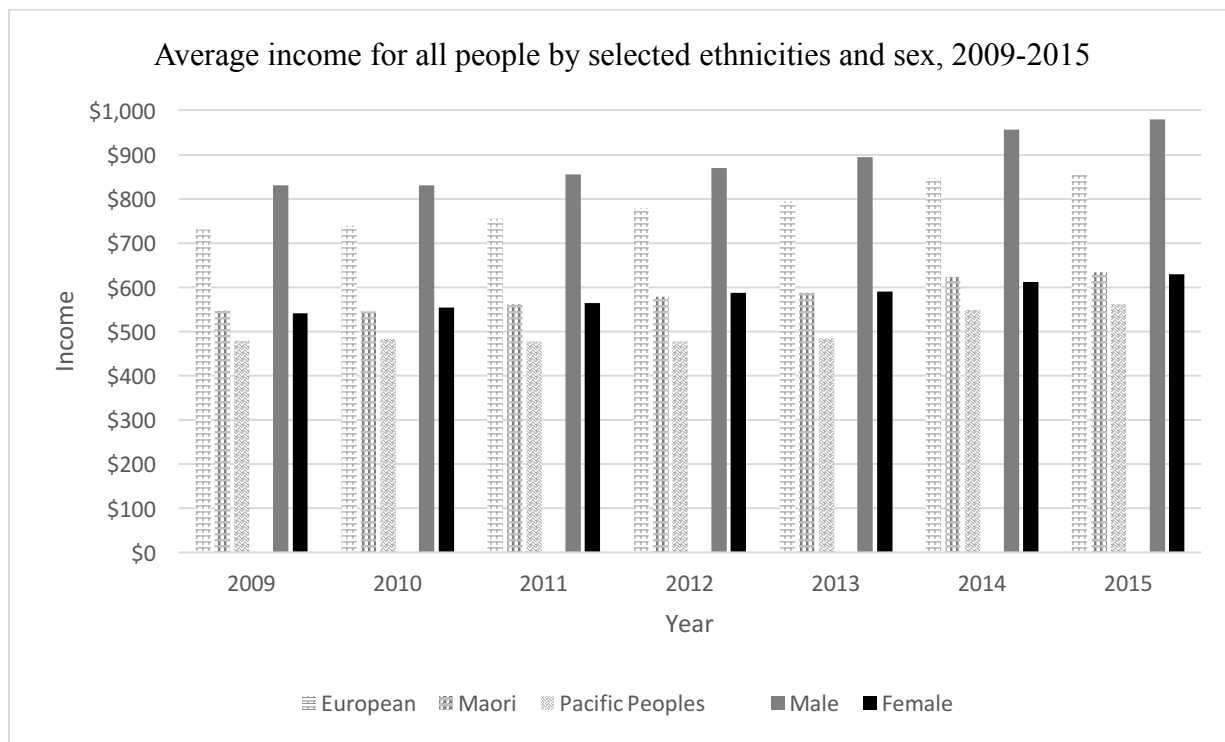
The relationship between structures of neoliberal political economy and food insecurity could be broadly described as having two steps: neoliberal political economy generates poverty, deprivation and hardship for the poorest in society, and these situations increase vulnerability to food insecurity. This description of the relationship fits the observations already made in this thesis, of the social and economic policy reform of the neoliberal turn and the clear and substantial negative financial consequences of these for the poorest citizens. It also fits with the description above of the significance and regularity of economic factors contributing to food insecurity, in particular the prominence of insufficient income described in Chapter 3.

#### *4.5.2 Structuring Vulnerability*

This sub-section will examine how the operation of neoliberal political economy affects vulnerability to food insecurity; how the structures of neoliberal political economy promote vulnerability to food insecurity. To summarise the argument so far: The structures of the neoliberal political economy work to produce the economic marginalisation of particular groups, reducing their capacity to cope with shocks or stress, as well as increasing the shocks and stresses to which they are subject. The regularities in factors associated with food insecurity across rich liberal democracies are structured by the neoliberal political economy, which does not support the standard of living of a disproportionately large number of members of demographic groups – those shown to be consistently vulnerable to food insecurity.

Harvey (2005, 87) describes the "general outcome" of structures of neoliberal political economy instituted by states as "lower wages, increasing job insecurity, and in many instances loss of benefits and job protections" for the workforce. The structures of neoliberal political economy do not support a level of household income for low-income households adequate for their costs of living. This sub-section will examine how structures of neoliberal political economy do not support resilience against food insecurity. First, I will consider the status of

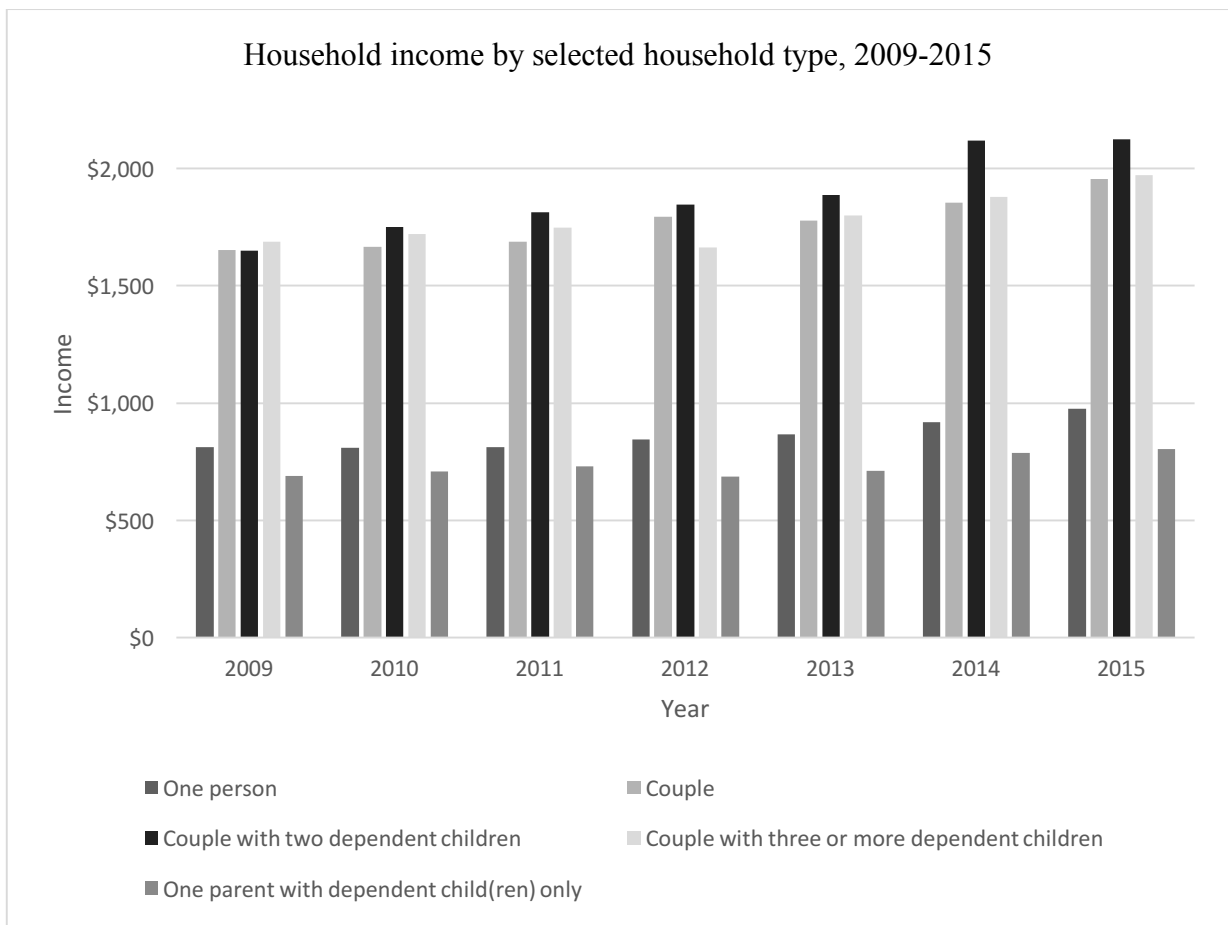
some groups consistently vulnerable to food insecurity, in terms of ethnicity, gender, and household type, as situated among the least (financially) rewarded people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Then, I will show that the operation of neoliberal political economy stagnates the incomes of the least rewarded in society, as it increases income inequality. The role of two elements of the structures of political economy in this will be examined in some detail – attempts to lower the costs businesses face by pursuing low labour costs, and neoliberal welfare reform (and other budget cuts) to decrease taxes paid by businesses.



**Figure 3: Average weekly income for all people by selected ethnicities and sex, 2009-2015. Data sourced from: Statistics New Zealand (2015b, a)**

Figure 3 shows that the incomes of Māori and Pacific peoples are lower than the incomes of European New Zealanders, and that the gap between these levels of income has increased, at least in absolute terms, between 2009 and 2015. It shows a similar pattern for the incomes of males and females.





**Figure 4: Average weekly household income by selected household type, 2009-2015. Data sourced from: Statistics New Zealand (2015b)**

Figure 4 shows that the household incomes of sole parents follow the same pattern evident in Figure 3: the level of income is lower, and it is stagnating compared to the increases in income of households headed by a couple, regardless of how many children are in those households.

I argue that there is a similarity in the incomes of particular ethnicities, of females, and of sole parents other than their low level and stagnation compared to those of other demographic groups. This similarity is that the structures of neoliberal political economy are in some way incompatible with, or somehow do not suit the situations of the people in these groups, putting them at a financial disadvantage. This incompatibility is too complex to investigate properly here, but there are two things important to mention. The first is that neoliberal political economy only financially rewards work in narrowly defined employment, continuing the tradition of markets in liberal democracies of not rewarding work carried out in the domestic sphere, or ‘volunteering’ in ‘the community’. This is relevant here because females most often

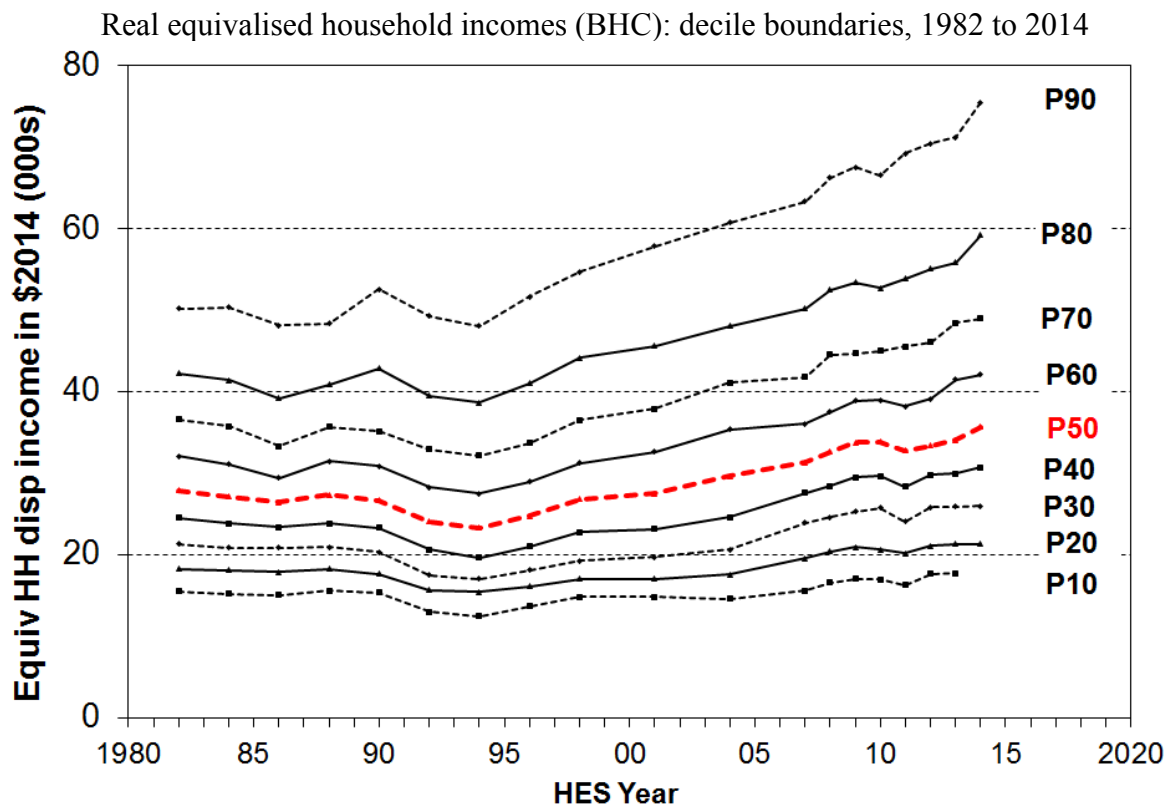
carry out domestic labour, and because paid employment is something that sole parents must balance with the requirements of domestic labour.

The second is that markets are socially embedded, so that social values, expectations and prejudices influence the operation of markets, notably the labour market. No matter how conscious or sub-conscious, racist and sexist presumptions influence employment. Spoonley (1996) offers an overview and theorisation of *The Racialisation of Work in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, describing both the influence of racism on employment and the historical and social contexts that have shaped the levels of income shown in Figure 3.

So, groups most vulnerable to food insecurity are made up of people who are, for some reason, less than compatible with structures of neoliberal economy. Significantly, this is not the only aspect of the operation of neoliberal political economy that fails to support the population against vulnerability to food insecurity. McLennan *et al.* (2000) report that:

In the 16 years after the economic reforms which began in 1984, the top 5% of households increased their share of the national wealth; the next 15% held their own while the bottom 80% are worse off[...] (2000, 149)

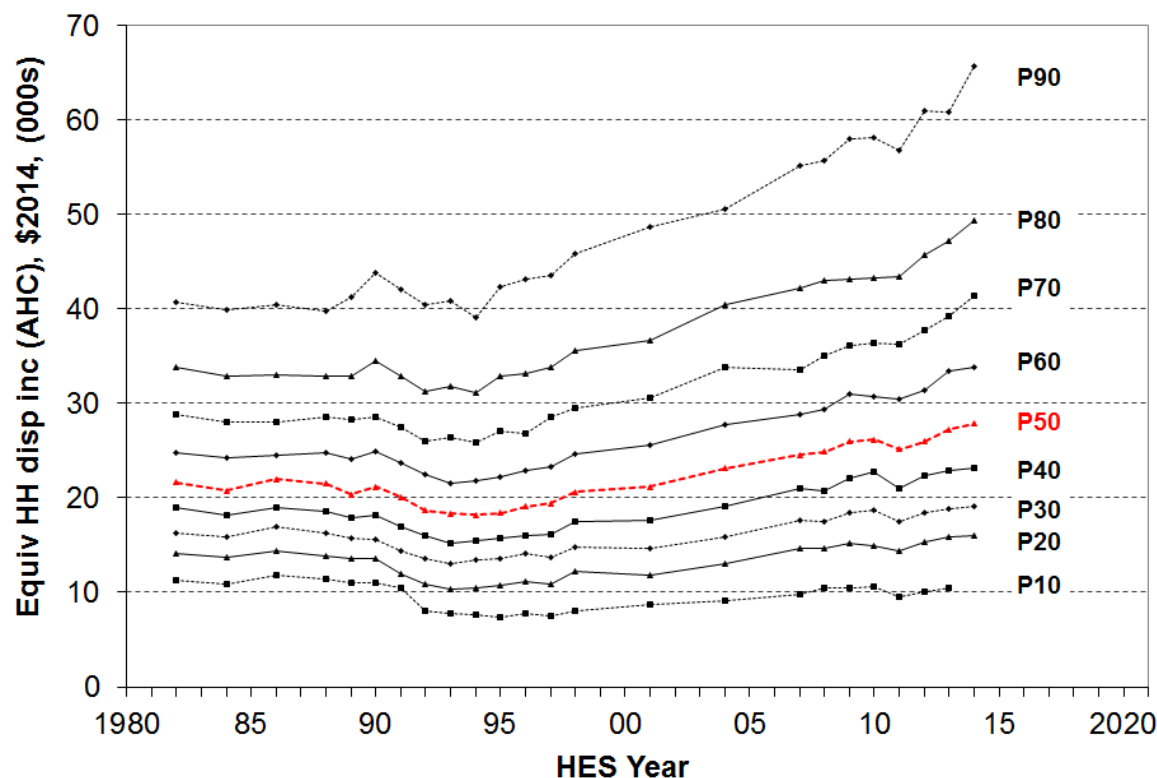
Deviation from this pattern have been slight. Neoliberal political economy operated to reduce the incomes of most of the population – not only the least rewarded. However, households with the lowest incomes are the most disadvantaged by neoliberal political economy. Evidence drawn from *Household incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2014* (Perry 2015) illustrates how. Figure 5 shows that a general growth in incomes from 1994 has done little to support the two lowest deciles, or to support most of the population compared to the upper two deciles. It is clear that income inequality has significantly increased in Aotearoa New Zealand between 1982 and 2014.



**Figure 5: Real equivalised household incomes (BHC): decile boundaries, 1982 to 2014. Figure from Perry (2015, 62)**

Figure 6 shows that the incomes of people in the lowest decile, once housing costs are accounted for, have decreased slightly since 1982. This demonstrates the weakness of neoliberal political economy as a set of structures supporting all citizens against vulnerability to food insecurity. It does indicate that, with rising prices for accommodation, energy, fuel and food, living on a low income is increasingly difficult, deprived, and with intensifying vulnerable to food insecurity. The differences between Figure 5 and Figure 6 highlight the importance of housing costs for household budgets in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Real equivalised household incomes (AHC): decile boundaries, 1982 to 2014 (2014 dollars)



**Figure 6: Real equivalised household incomes (AHC): decile boundaries, 1982 to 2014 (2014 dollars).** Figure from Perry (2015, 64)

While not wishing to conflate income inequality and insufficient income or poverty<sup>16</sup>, it is apparent that the neoliberal promise of an economic ‘rising tide’ to the benefit of all has not delivered. Rather, the structures of neoliberal political economy have left sections of the population with household incomes that leave them vulnerable to food insecurity. The stagnation of low incomes is not a necessary accompaniment to increasing income inequality; but this is what has happened in Aotearoa New Zealand. “The distribution of [incomes and] wealth is becoming more unequal and the numbers of people in poverty are growing” (McLennan *et al.* 2000, 149).

The operation of the neoliberal political economy does not support low-income households to be food secure because food security in Aotearoa New Zealand is generally based on buying

<sup>16</sup> “A major difference between income inequality and income poverty is that a certain degree of inequality is considered by almost everyone to be inevitable and acceptable, and even desirable. There is no similar widely held view about unacceptably low incomes and material deprivation. Income poverty and material deprivation are by definition unacceptable states of affairs” (Perry 2015, 70). For an excellent introduction to the problem of income inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand, see *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis* edited by Rashbrooke (2013a). An interesting disaggregation of income inequality and poverty is proved by Carter *et al.* in their article *The relationship between trends in income inequalities and poverty in New Zealand* (2013).

food, as described in sub-section 4.5.1 above. General trends of stagnation reflect multiple specific trends due to the structures of neoliberal political economy. I will describe two key elements of these structures in Aotearoa New Zealand which contribute to the economic marginalisation of groups vulnerable to food insecurity: the lowering of costs for businesses by pursuing low labour costs and the emergence of the working poor, and neoliberal welfare reform and the development of ‘workfare’ (Jessop 2003).

These two are significant elements of the neoliberal policy regime in Aotearoa New Zealand, driven by a commitment to the ideal of efficiency in markets. Both operate to constrain the ability of households to access available food by restricting household income; they contribute to household incomes being so low as to risk sufficient entitlements to food, so as to make households vulnerable to food insecurity in a food-exporting, rich liberal democracy with a welfare state. Of course, the two are not unrelated. Most obviously, welfare cuts can fund cuts to taxes, another cost for business.

The following sections provide a brief explanation of how these two aspects of structures of neoliberal political economy increase the vulnerability of low-income households to food insecurity. They do not seek to provide a detailed or comprehensive analysis of the operation of a neoliberal political economy, or even of the pursuit of efficiency in labour costs or the incisive reformation of the welfare system. While falling far short of capturing the complexity of the operation of the neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand, its particular context and its situational development, it is still important to offer some summary evidence with which to ground the theorisation in this thesis so far.

#### Low Labour Costs

Low labour costs for business are important in neoliberal thought because profitable, competitive and growing businesses are the phenomena, it is believed, which generate the wealth from which the whole of society will eventually benefit, and businesses are more profitable if their costs are lower. Following a neoliberal policy agenda, then, the state seeks to facilitate low labour costs for business. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the state has done this in a number of ways.

Roper (2006, 169) describes key aspects of *Business political activity in New Zealand from 1990 to 2005*, including: advocating “anti-union industrial relations reform” seeking labour market ‘flexibility’; reductions in state spending, especially on welfare, to fund tax cuts; and the

repeal of the Employment Equity Act 1990. Roper (2011, 20, 234) explains that the Employment Contract Act 1991 “undermined the organisational and bargaining strength of unions” in Aotearoa New Zealand, and that its replacement, the Employment Relations Act 2000, retained the “central features of the employment relations system” of the earlier Act. The Employment Relations Amendment Act 2015 has brought further ‘flexibility’ to employment relations.

Hackell (2007) situates the early development of neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand in the context of changing discourses of competitiveness (see Chapter 4). The 1990s saw (international) competitiveness become an explicit goal of government policy, replacing the exploitation of the far less changeable ‘comparative advantage’ of Ricardian theory (Hackell 2007). To summarise; the structures of neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand treat workers as a labour cost to be minimised in the quest towards efficiency for competitive advantage through profitability.

It is fairly clear that interpolation of people in the workforce as a cost in production to be minimised contributes to the lagging incomes of the lower deciles in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Therefore, this conception of wages and benefits is in tension with the need for people to gain sufficient income at least to cover their household’s costs of living. It does not reduce vulnerability to food insecurity; it does not “reduce exposure, enhance coping capacity, strengthen recovery potential and bolster damage control” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 118).

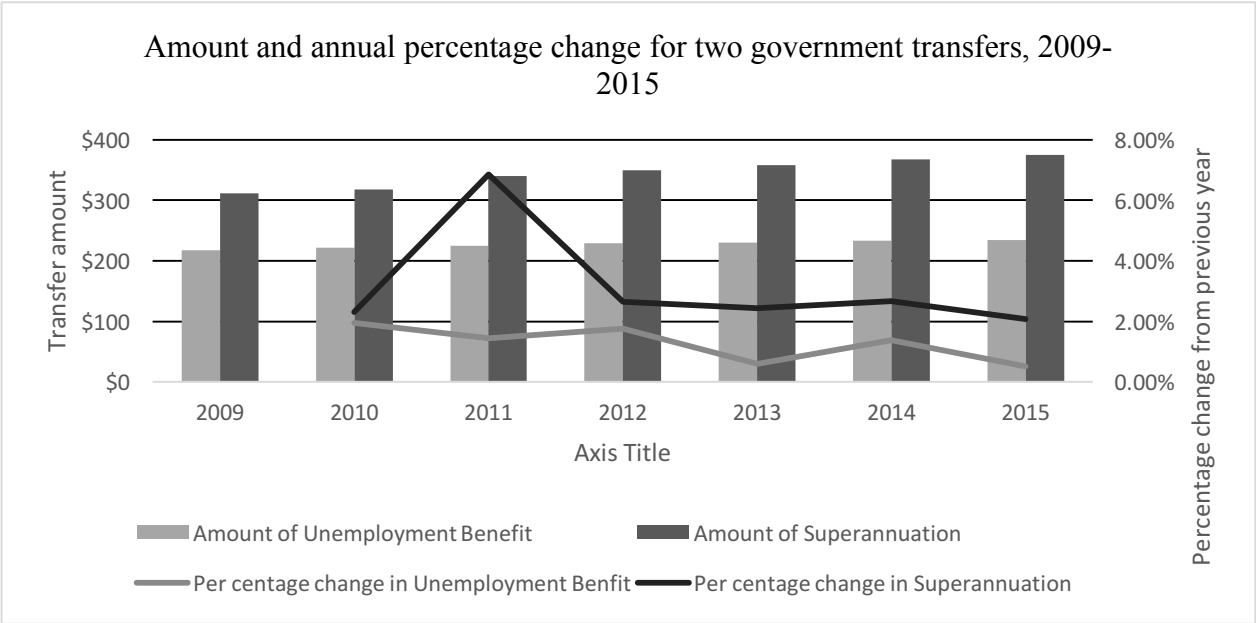
As mentioned above, political economic structures designed to promote competitive businesses could, in theory, operate to increase the incomes and material standard of living of the entire population, and to decrease the vulnerability of all households to food insecurity. However, it is apparent that this has not happened in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A number of important issues are relevant here but will not be pursued. These include: (1) the “overall taxation system is not markedly progressive by international standards” (Roper 2005, 234); (2) the “300,000 people earning on or near the minimum wage, with no bargaining mechanism[... when the] minimum wage is not a liveable wage” (Kelly and Conway 2014, 72); (3) the lack of structural support for gaining decent employment – education, training, apprenticeships; (4) the extensive use of a competitive tendering process to contract out a huge variety of functions; and (5) the recently controversial ‘zero-hour’ contracts. Another aspect of

neoliberal political economy that contributes to vulnerability to food insecurity through insufficient household incomes is the (ongoing) reform of the welfare system.

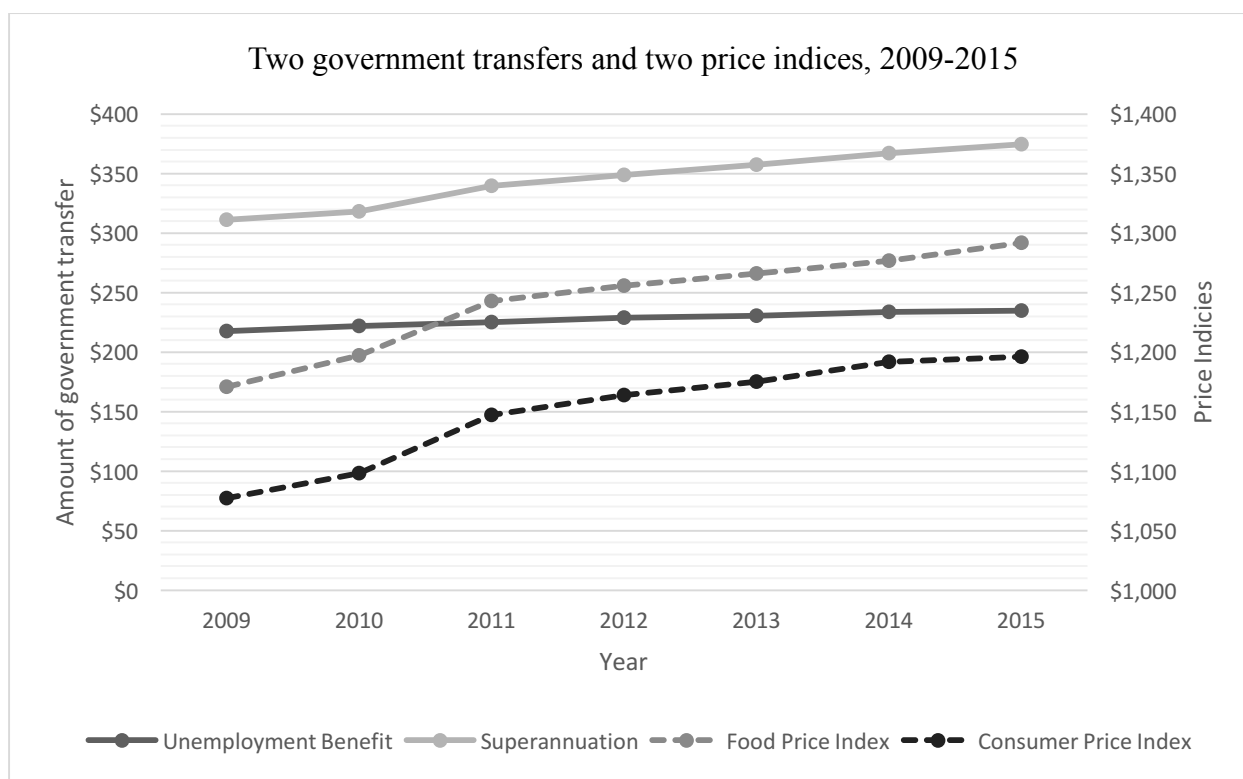
Welfare Reform

Neoliberal reforms of welfare states have been the subject of significant academic attention, analysis and critique. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Roper (2006, 169) describes the neoliberal welfare reforms of 1991 as bringing “substantial cuts to welfare benefit rates and a savage tightening of eligibility criteria”. Since those cuts, benefit rates have trailed the costs of living; the low levels of benefits situate recipients as vulnerable to food insecurity.



**Figure 7: Amount and annual percentage change for two government transfers, 2009-2015. Data sourced from: Work and Income (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), Statistics New Zealand (2015c)**

The level of superannuation is intended to support a decent standard of living for the elderly in Aotearoa New Zealand, as already mentioned. The gap between the government transfers for superannuation and for unemployment, shown in Figure 7, makes the consistent and increasing inadequacy of the benefit payments clear. Data from 2009 to 2015 highlight how benefit levels fall further from an adequate level year on year; the percentage increase is consistently lower than that of superannuation payments.



**Figure 8: Two government transfers and two price indices, 2009-2015. Data sourced from: Work and Income (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), Statistics New Zealand (2015c)**

This trend is also evident in Figure 8, where the level of superannuation payments appears to be much more responsive to changes in costs than benefit levels. Rising costs are not well reflected by rising incomes for beneficiaries. It is not surprising, then, that research by Smith (2011, 192) found that in Aotearoa New Zealand, “for those families receiving a Government Benefit, food insecurity was predominant”. Another measure of the insufficiency of benefits as a response to food insecurity is to compare the money available for welfare-receiving households to spend on food with the University of Otago’s annual Food Cost Survey (Department of Human Nutrition 2014), as has been reported in the *New Zealand Herald* (Ihaka 2013).

The apparent intention of the New Zealand government’s welfare reforms has been to avoid “long-term dependency on welfare” and remove ‘attractive’ benefit payments as a “barrier to a competitive labour market” (Uttley 1997, 93). This is consistent with Riches’ description of the reasoning behind “neo-conservative policy”: “state welfare simply creates and prolongs public dependency, which is morally bad and indefensible” (Riches 1986, 108). Esping-Andersen



(1990) observes that such motivations mean that rules of entitlement to welfare are strict and associated with stigma, while payments are “modest” (in Riches 1999, 205).

A fault with the neoliberal logic which reduces benefits is that there are not enough well-paying jobs for everyone (Riches 1997d, 68). This leads Riches to observe that:

If the right to food security is to be constrained by people's ability to participate fully in the marketplace, particularly in societies which show little inclination to support full employment, the future is one of increasing risk and vulnerability. (1997b, 5)

Successive New Zealand governments have been committed to central tenets of neoliberal policy, effectively embedding neoliberalism in the New Zealand policy landscape (Roper 2005). One aspect of this is “the withdrawal of the state’s commitment to maintain genuine full employment” (Kelsey 2002, 51), meaning that there will always be a group of people reliant on (insufficient) welfare income for their access to food. An added concern here is the incidence of food insecurity amongst the working poor in New Zealand (McPherson 2006; McNeill 2011), indicating that even if punitive benefit levels do function to encourage people into work<sup>17</sup>, food insecurity is not effectively responded to.

One issue related to the reform of the welfare system in Aotearoa New Zealand is the “balance of welfare provision” shifting away from the state, towards non-statutory welfare providers and households – individuals and families – in most cases less able to provide for their needy (Krishnan 1995, page). Another related issue is the apparent neglect of the state’s responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil its citizens’ right to food and freedom from hunger (OHCHR 2015; United Nations 1948, 1966, 1989). A third related issue is the changing nature of citizenship (Hackell 2007, 2013).

The “combination of labour market failure and tightening social security policy has caused difficulties for many people living precarious lives to achieve an adequate standard of living, including adequate food and nutrition” (Silvasti and Riches 2014, 196). Across rich liberal democracies, neoliberal political economy emerging from neoliberalisation has seen “increasing hunger and unacceptable hardships, inadequate benefits and punitive welfare policies, government denial and uncoordinated public policy” (Riches 1997e, 165). Insufficient household income, a significant contributor to vulnerability to food insecurity in rich liberal

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<sup>17</sup> There is a dearth of evidence that lower benefit levels do ‘encourage’ people in the workforce to gain employment and enter the labour force (Uttley 1997, 104).

democracies, is contributed to by the state seeking to lower the cost of labour for businesses and neoliberal welfare reform, or the erosion of the welfare state (Riches 2002; Tarasuk and Davis 1996).

#### **4.6 Vulnerability How?: The Space of Vulnerability**

In this chapter, I have described regular patterns in the data concerning factors associated with food insecurity across rich liberal democracies. I argued that these represent disadvantage in the structures of a neoliberal political economy. I offered an account of neoliberal ideas and the development of neoliberal political economy through social and economic policies from 1984 in Aotearoa New Zealand. I examined the operation of the neoliberal political economy to stifle the level of income for the least rewarded in society, visible in income inequality and a growth in poverty since the neoliberal turn; and noted the role of two important elements of the structure of neoliberal political economy, minimising business costs and welfare payments, in these trends. I will now introduce a cohesive theoretical framing of this argument, drawing on that described by Watts and Bohle (1993) as the “space of vulnerability”.

Watts and Bohle (1993, 118) describe vulnerability as “a multi-layered and multi-dimensional social space defined by the determinate political, economic and institutional capabilities of people in specific places at specific times”. With this understanding, they argue that Drèze and Sen’s (1989) concept of entitlements needs to be expanded to account for three dimensions in the “space of vulnerability” to hunger: entitlement and capability, class and crisis, and empowerment and enfranchisement. They view these as accounting for the range of social, class, political and structural influences which make people and groups vulnerable to hunger. Their definition of vulnerability will be repeated here for clarity; Watts and Bohle define vulnerability in terms of three “basic co-ordinates”:

1. The risk of exposure to crises, stress and shocks,
2. The risk of inadequate capacities to cope with stress, crises and shocks,
3. The risk of severe consequences of, and the attendant risks of slow or limited recovery (resiliency) from crises, risk and shocks. (1993, 118)

The dimensions of the “space of vulnerability” align with three “complementary theoretical positions”, which in tandem constitute “a causal structure of vulnerability” to hunger (Watts and Bohle 1993, 123). These are summarised in Table 3. Each dimension is also linked to one aspect of the definition of vulnerability, as indicated in Table 3.

The entitlement and capability dimension of vulnerability to food insecurity covers a socio-economic space containing “three domains: market perturbations (economic exchange), coping thresholds (socio-economics of resilience) and social security limitations (informal “moral economies” or formal welfare institutions)” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 119). In Aotearoa New Zealand, these might correspond to increases in food prices, flexibility in household budgets, and social support networks and the welfare state, respectively. People who are vulnerable are those who lack surety of income – the unemployed, underemployed, casually employed etcetera – and/or surety of expenses – particularly unexpected expenses beyond the scope of savings to cover.

The political economy dimension of vulnerability to food insecurity covers the historical specificity of social relations of production and the “crisis tendencies” that these have (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120). Vulnerability is understood as “a structural-historical space which is shaped by the effects of commercialization, proletarianization and marginalization”, and analysis attempts “to account for how and why particular patterns of entitlement and empowerment are produced and reproduced in society” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120-1). While a political economy analysis understands food insecurity as a ‘poverty problem’, it also captures a wider scene: “an understanding not simply of assets but of the relations by which surpluses are mobilized and appropriated” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120). People who are vulnerable are those whose entitlements to food are not well supported by the structure of the economy – the poorly paid and the unemployed<sup>18</sup>.

The empowerment or enfranchisement dimension of vulnerability to food insecurity recognises that political rights are “central to the process by which claims can be made over public resources as a basis for food security, and to maintain and defend entitlements” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 119). Reducing vulnerability through “a promotion of entitlements [...] can only be meaningfully understood as an exercise of political power” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 119), and clearly involves the benefit of one group at the expense of others. While “vulnerability is inscribed in three domains: the domestic (patriarchal and generational politics), work (production politics) and the public sphere (state politics)” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 119), the focus here will be on ‘state politics’ in Aotearoa New Zealand. People who are vulnerable are

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<sup>18</sup> Society’s so-called ‘surplus’ labour, which contribute to the groups which Edgar S. Cahn calls ‘throw-away people’.

those who cannot “legitimately participate in the decisions of a given society about entitlement” – those without a (political) voice (Appadurai 1984 in Watts and Bohle 1993, 119). Watts and Bohle note that “[i]n this context, hunger is a massive violation of the most basic human rights; hunger is a sort of silent – and sometimes quite noisy – violence imposed on the powerless” (1993, 119). This empowerment or enfranchisement dimension of vulnerability to food insecurity will be examined in Chapter 5.

Watts and Bohle’s (1993) theorisation may offer some clarification, it being a cohesive framework into which elements of this thesis can be placed, illuminating their relationships to one another and perhaps illustrating their character a little more clearly. Seeking such a fit, it is clear that the entitlement and political economy dimensions are what this thesis has dealt with so far. The entitlement perspective focuses on the immediate state of affairs in which people have “declining command over food” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 122). While Watts and Bohle’s focus on hunger and famine crises in economically developing countries includes a wider range of phenomena, it is apparent that there is a single, dominant barrier to households’ capability of accessing food in rich liberal democracies: insufficient household income.

A perspective that focuses on political economy has been utilised in this chapter, focusing on the structures that combine to produce the vulnerability of low-income households to food insecurity. Watts and Bohle provide a generalised and explicitly structural analysis: the “social relations of production”, characterised by “the ways in which surpluses are appropriated and distributed”, have “crisis tendencies” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120). These are “the structural pre-conditions” which shape the processes in which food insecurity develop (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120).

Much of what Watts and Bohle (1993) have to say about a political economy perspective on the causal structure of hunger is relevant here. They note that both an entitlement perspective and a political economy perspective deal with impairments in capability to access food. The latter conceives of the capacity at a large scale;

specifically class capacity defined by the social relations of production in which individuals and households participate. ... [Food insecurity] and hunger are poverty problems but this requires an understanding not simply of assets but of the relations by which surpluses are mobilized and appropriated. (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120)

<b>Dimension</b>	<i>Entitlement and capability</i>	<i>Political economy</i>	<i>Empowerment or enfranchisement</i>
<b>Definition</b>	Ability to have “command over food” (120)	The particular “structural-historical form of class relations” of a society (121)	“[S]tate-civil society relations seen in political and institutional terms” (121)
<b>Focus of analysis</b>	How entitlements to food are distributed and how they are “reproduced in specific circumstances” (117)	The “structural properties [...] of the political economy which precipitates entitlement crises” (117)	The “larger canvas of rights” within which entitlements to food are defined, gained and lost (117)
<b>Link to vulnerability</b>	Potentiality: consequences of shock/crisis	Capacity: to cope with shock/crisis	Exposure: to shock/crisis
<b>Vulnerability due to; experienced by</b>	Entitlement problem; resource-poor people	Appropriation and exploitation in the social relations of production; exploited people	Powerlessness; powerless people

**Table 3: A summary of the dimensions of the space of vulnerability drawing on Watts and Bohle (1993)**

The implications of this can be utilised to provide a definition of vulnerability from the perspective of political economy: “Vulnerability is thus a structural-historical space which is shaped by the effects of commercialization, proletarianization and marginalization” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 121).

The analysis of structures here should not, and need not, distract from the central importance of food insecure people. The structural dimensions of the space of vulnerability are not maliciously agentic, nor do they determine food insecurity; rather, they form “historically and socially specific realms of choice and constraint” within which people live and households operate (Watts and Bohle 1993, 118). Furthermore, Watts and Bohle (1993, 121) emphasise that the three dimensions can only be understood relationally, and indeed that the concept of vulnerability itself “is fundamentally relational”.

This thesis began with an examination of the implications of food insecurity and specific demographic characteristics of people most likely to suffer it, in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. This chapter (Chapter 4) has argued that this empirical information can – and should – be meaningfully situated in the context of the operation of the neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand. “The processes by which hunger becomes famine reflect a short-term expression of larger crisis tendencies and conflicts within the political economy” (Watts and Bohle 1993, 120). That is, the vulnerability to food insecurity experienced by particular groups in a rich liberal democracy reflect the economic marginalisation of these groups by the structures of the neoliberal political economy.

Chapter 5 seeks to situate meaningfully the operation of this political economy within a particular understanding of the social-political context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Here, the third dimension of the “social map” of vulnerability to food insecurity which Watts and Bohle (1993, 117) describe – the (lack of) empowerment or enfranchisement of the vulnerable – comes to the fore. The two dimensions of the space of vulnerability and the focus of this chapter on the structures of the neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand are a necessary part of the theorisation of food insecurity here. However, they do not form a fully sufficient explanation. Chapter 5 extends this chapter’s structural explanation of food insecurity with a more post-structural theorisation of the significance of citizens’ subjectivities in forming the social-political context within which vulnerability to food insecurity occurs.

## Chapter 5 – Constructing Food Insecurity: A Neoliberal Understanding

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction	Causes for concern	Associated factors	A structural explanation	A post-structural explanation
More than empirical	Constructing food insecurity: self-responsibilisation		Depoliticisation	
The climate of construction	Depoliticisation & neoliberal governmentality		The Space of Vulnerability	

“The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich”.

- John Berger

So far in this thesis I have shown or argued for links, in rich liberal democracies, between: (1) negative health outcomes and food insecurity; (2) being poor and being vulnerable to food insecurity; and (3) being in particular demographic groups and being poor. I have also argued for links, in Aotearoa New Zealand specifically, between: the neoliberal political economy and increasing poverty, especially for particular demographic groups; and, subsequently, the neoliberal political economy and vulnerability to food insecurity. It is possible that the validity of some of these links may be subject to contestation, but the empirical evidence upon which they are based is not. That is, the thesis so far has had a strong grounding in empirical evidence.

This chapter continues the narrative of Chapter 4, which identified and explained the macro-level structural changes associated with the neoliberal turn as a significant turning point for food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this chapter, I suggest that the neoliberal turn in Aotearoa New Zealand may constitute both a structural transition, requiring a structural explanation, and also potentially a transition at the level of governmentality and individual citizen subjectivity, requiring a more post-structural explanation. Put another way, where

Chapter 4 examined food insecurity through the lens of an orthodox political economy of the neoliberal turn, this chapter is grounded in the more recent theorisation of neoliberalism characterised by the more post-structural work of scholars such as Larner (e.g. 2000), Brown (e.g. 2015), and e.g. Nairn, Higgins, and Sligo (2012). This approach emphasises governance, governmentality and subjectivity.

This way of theorising the neoliberal transition foregrounds the way that the problem of food insecurity is *thought* about, which has strong implications for how it is treated. Turning to the significance and nature of citizens' subjectivities and regimes of governance regarding food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, I introduce the concept of depoliticisation. I suggest that this might provide compelling insights into how a significant minority of the population in this country is persistently vulnerable to food insecurity. I use depoliticisation to consider governmentalities, citizens' subjectivities and the wider social-political context in which household food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Central to the potential explanation put forward in this chapter is the social-political context within which the structures of neoliberal political economy exist. One possible reason for the persistence of vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is the *social* marginalisation of those people who are *economically* marginalised by the structures of neoliberal political economy. I argued in Chapter 4 that these structures drive vulnerability to food insecurity. At a structural level, this is well supported by empirical evidence. This chapter's more post-structural theorisation of the neoliberal turn as significant to vulnerability to food insecurity draws together several theoretical elements and has more tenuous links to empirical evidence.

The first section of this chapter (5.1) will explain why examining citizen subjectivities are meaningful in the context of this thesis's research question. The second section (5.2) describes the dominant construction of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The following sections detail the concepts of depoliticisation (5.3) and of neoliberal governmentality (5.4). The subsequent section (5.5) develops depoliticisation: as an aspect of the wider operation of neoliberal governmentalities (5.5.1); as entailing the politicisation of individuals (5.5.2); and in relation to Watts and Bohle's (1993) space of vulnerability (5.5.3). The final section (5.6) reviews the ways in which food insecurity might be theorised as being a depoliticised problem in this country.



## 5.1 More than Empirical

Empirical evidence concerning food insecurity, reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, is compelling. Chapter 4 built on this evidence to explain dramatically increasing levels of food insecurity as an outcome of the operation of the neoliberal political economy. I suggest, however, that food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand involves dynamics that are not captured by an empirical or structural analysis and that a more post-structural focus is required to examine more fully the implications of the neoliberal turn. While I suggest that this additional analytical focus represents a move away from an incomplete structural account, this should not be understood as my claiming to offer a full and sufficient account; just a necessary one.

In Chapter 4 I argued that the introduction of structures of the neoliberal political economy to Aotearoa New Zealand from the 1980s constituted a vital turning point in the story of food insecurity in this country. However, just as neoliberalism does not only refer to a political-economic configuration (Larner 2000), the influence of neoliberal political rationality in Aotearoa New Zealand has not been limited to the structural adjustments of political economy. I suggest that neoliberal political rationality, in the work done by neoliberal governmentality, has shaped political and ethical conduct and norms, subjective positions and ways of thinking, as well as transforming structures of governance and the political economy. Such work has profound implications for food insecurity among other issues. The explanation put forward in this chapter adds a more post-structural dimension to Chapter 4's structural theorisation of the neoliberal turn as a pivotal moment for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In this section, I make the case for examining how food insecurity is thought about as a potential explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. One reason that the political and ethical dimensions of household food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand merit consideration is because it is an inherently social condition. The reasons that food insecurity exists in a rich, liberal democratic and food-secure country are inherently social reasons – morals, values, and expectations. Riches (1986) explicitly links the orientation of political structures and policies to social values, assumptions, priorities and choices:

All social and economic policies rest on values and assumptions[:]... political priorities. Spending is choosing. It is important when seeking explanations to expose those often unspoken values, confront the issues and understand the real choices. (Riches 1986, 102)

The distribution of plentiful food is socially determined, resting on values and priorities – political and ethical choices about how society is organised.

This suggests another reason: the significance of the context within which the structures of neoliberal political economy and persistent vulnerability to food insecurity discussed in Chapter 4 exist. This context is the social, discursive, political-ethical situation within which: (1) a significant minority of the population is persistently rendered vulnerable to food insecurity; (2) the ‘social and economic policies’ Riches describes are formed, operate and are subject to support or contestation, including the structures of neoliberal political economy; (3) significant empirical evidence concerning food insecurity, and deprivation more generally, is generated and disseminated; and (4) there appears not to be significant public concern about food insecurity, or other forms of deprivation. It is also the situation in which, less tangibly, ‘common sense’ is formed, as well as notions of acceptability and the tone of social relations.

Drawing on ideas in post-structuralist literature (for instance Larner 2000; Nairn *et al.* 2012), I contend that it is important to consider the context of social values, assumptions, priorities and choices – in short, the country’s social-political context – as being constituted in citizen subjectivities. That is, citizens’ subjectivities constitute the context within which food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. I suggest in sub-section 5.4.2 that the hegemonic citizen subjectivity, and so the social-political context in this country is neoliberal – constituted with reference to neoliberal political rationality.

In a narrower and more direct sense, citizens’ subjectivities are significant to policy formation. The democratic process and relatively short election cycle in Aotearoa New Zealand provide the potential for the successful application of public pressure to influence policy formation. This was evident in the influence of small but vocal protests in May 2014 on the alteration of ‘legal high’ legislation<sup>19</sup>.

Hall (2011, 728) remarks that the influence of what he calls the ‘neoliberal project’ in the UK has resulted in “popular thinking and the systems of calculation in daily life offer[ing] very little friction to the passage of [neoliberal] ideas”. I contend that citizens’ subjectivities in Aotearoa New Zealand offer little friction to the construction of food insecurity as a problem

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<sup>19</sup> Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne stated that: “The public concern of recent weeks has led me to revisit [the legality of synthetic recreational drugs]” (Davison 2014, n.p.).

that is the fault of individuals who suffer food insecurity. This chapter suggests that this self-responsibilisation can be explained as an aspect of the depoliticisation of deprivation, of which food insecurity is one element.

A concern expressed in Chapter 1 was an apparent gap between the worrying empirical evidence about food insecurity and an apparent lack of public concern about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. I suggest that this gap is related to the depoliticisation of food insecurity because depoliticisation has to do with how things are thought about. Food insecurity appears to be thought about as *something not to be concerned about*. Central to the explanation for food insecurity put forward in this chapter is neoliberal political rationality, which could be considered the foundation of both structural and subjective transitions following the neoliberal turn in this country. The influence of this rationality is one explanation for food insecurity being something not to be concerned about.

“If making and unmaking the world in one way rather than another is a political matter” (Law and Mol 2008, 141), then the role of citizens’ subjectivities in determining contingencies in one way rather than another is of great significance. From this perspective, the relationship between structures – the neoliberal policy regime and the neoliberal political economy – and vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is one supported by a social-political context, constituted in citizens’ subjectivities.

Before engaging theories to form a possible explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand, I will use some of the available literature to describe the framing of food insecurity that is argued to be dominant in this country, in the next section (5.2).

## **5.2 Problem Representation: Food Insecurity and Self-responsibilisation**

The social-political situation discussed in the previous section (5.1) provides the context for the particular way that the problem of food insecurity is understood in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, a ‘problem’ like household food insecurity is not simply “a puzzle or challenge that needs to be ‘solved’” (Bacchi 2009, x). The empirical data reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 might well lead to the conclusion finely expressed by Gorton *et al.* (2010, 2): “the need to address issues of food insecurity in high-income countries seems pressing”. Acting to resolve this concern is complicated by food insecurity having fundamentally social causes; it is a political and ethical problem. The persistence of household food insecurity across decades in Aotearoa New Zealand indicates that empirical evidence alone cannot be expected to generate a ‘solution’.

As noted in Chapter 1, Bacchi (2009, xi) makes the distinction between ‘social conditions’ (e.g. binge drinking) and ‘problems’ (e.g. irresponsible youth behaviour), and argues that the latter is a matter of “problem representation”. The way that food insecurity is understood as a problem – its problem representation – problematises particular aspects of a situation. These aspects become what is (considered to be) problematic in a given social condition, and so what needs to be altered to address food insecurity. Therefore, these representations constitute problems in the sense that they legitimise or make thinkable particular ways of responding to or addressing social conditions while delegitimising, erasing or making unthinkable other ways.

A significant amount of empirical research into food insecure households is concerned with the nutrition of household members – and it is clear that adults in food insecure households tend to have worse nutrition than their food secure counterparts. This information documents an element of a social condition, but the research does not make the problem clear: is poor nutrition due to poor choices; to differences in prices between ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ foods; to food habits; to the frequency of meals; to the preparation of meals; and so on. More empirical research highlights the economic drivers of food insecurity, but again, the problem could be: insufficient state support for the right of citizens to access food (Riches 1997a); the violence of systems against vulnerable populations (Shepherd 2012); over-consumption; the high costs of living; feckless unemployment; a low-wage economy; structural unemployment; and so on.

Another, perhaps broader, perspective, such as that offered by Law and Mol (2008) might point out that empirical research has its own particular view of a phenomena before investigating it, which inherently carries particular problematisations of events, or rather, particular versions of reality. A narrower perspective is adopted here, interrogating the structural and subjective social-political-economic context(s) of household food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

While Bacchi’s (2009) focus is on policy analysis, and so on the central role of government in generating problem representations, I want to emphasise the importance of citizen subjectivities in accepting, legitimating, and giving political strength to particular problem representations. This theoretical position suggests that the hegemony of neoliberal political rationality as an influence on citizens’ subjectivities, as well as policy makers’ professional approaches, facilitates the problematisation of troubling social conditions in a way that avoids conflict with the neoliberal policy regime.

Specifically, I would draw together all these theoretical insights to suggest that the hegemonic characterisation of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is as a problem of individuals' self-responsibility. I will now provide a review of some observations about this characterisation, articulating a critique of neoliberalism as being responsible for shifting social problems into being individual problems. This will provide some context for the argument that the operation of neoliberal governmentality depoliticises particular social conditions through the self-responsibilisation of the deprived.

The Prime Minister, Mr Key, has articulated a particular problematisation of food insecurity on several occasions. In 2011, he asserted that "anyone on a benefit actually has a lifestyle choice. If one budgets properly, one can pay one's bills", and that a significant rise in food parcels given out by the Salvation Army were due to "poor choices" by some individuals, because "the bulk of New Zealanders on a benefit do actually pay for food, their rent and other things" (Trevett 2011b). He reaffirmed this at a later date, pointing again to beneficiaries "failing to budget properly" as the problem (Davison 2011, n.p.). Mr Key said that "there was no question that [beneficiaries] are struggling but people also make choices and it's obviously really important that they make good choices" (Davison 2011, n.p.)<sup>20</sup>. Regarding children going to school without lunches, Mr Key asserted that the problem was very small, with "only the odd one or two" children going hungry in Decile 1-4 schools (those with the lowest parental incomes) (NZEI Te Riu Roa 2014).

That this problem representation is articulated by a Prime Minister of three terms, who consistently positions himself as the centrist non-radical, a sensible average bloke, is significant. I argue that the Prime Minister speaks about the problem of food insecurity in a way that represents a subject position aligned with neoliberal ideas and values: as a problem of individuals' self-responsibility.

As I have noted, following Hall (2011), considering neoliberalism to be a hegemonic project does not assert an absence of variety, contradiction or opposition. Other problematisations are available, and are articulated in public. Perhaps the most salient of these is that the government is not doing the right things, or has the wrong priorities, in addressing (or failing to address)

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<sup>20</sup> Perhaps relevant to this comment is the central issue of the article *Heat or Eat* (Frank *et al.* 2006), about the choice between paying to heat one's house and paying for food faced by low-income households with children in the USA.

food insecurity. This is often articulated in relation to children – hungry children are emotive as well as hard to blame for their plight, thereby avoiding the self-responsibilisation of the dominant neoliberal problem representation. A notable instance of this, brought to media attention in 2014, was the provision of sandwiches to hungry children in local schools by a Waikato gang, the Tribal Huks (Cronin 2014). The gang’s leader, Jamie Pink, said that

“There’s no reason, with our resources in New Zealand, that we got hungry kinds – we got 260,000 of them. 260,000. And if anything the government should do something about that. They should.” (Scott 2014)

A similarly state-centred problem representation is articulated by political opponents and representatives of organisations concerned for the welfare of beneficiaries in numerous other instances.

Hall’s concerns notwithstanding, I suggest that the hegemonic problematisation of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand is the one articulated by Mr Key. This is well summarised in a *New Zealand Herald* column: “The widely held view is that parents are to blame, that they spend their money on booze, smokes and other drugs and let their children starve” (George 2011, n.p.). An important implication of this problem representation of the social condition of food insecurity is that because the problem lies with (or within) the individual, the state – or anyone else, for that matter – is not responsible for food security. If food insecurity, and deprivation more generally, are due to the faults of individuals, then these cannot be issues of collective concern, by definition. Furthermore, the state is *less* than not responsible; entities other than the at-fault, food insecure person (children excepted) have little influence over whether a person is food secure or not, so the state actually *cannot* help through intervention.

The emphasis on the individual in neoliberal political rationality and the construction of food insecurity as a problem of and for individuals is clearly at odds with the regularities in suffering described in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I suggest that the economic marginalisation described and characterised in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, is underwritten by a *social* marginalisation. That is, processes of marginalisation that are amenable to being understood in structural terms exist within, and are supported by, a social-political context that is amenable to being understood in more post-structural terms.

Kurian and Munshi (2012) describe a cultural dynamic which may provide an additional barrier to perceptions of structural influence in food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand: a *Shadow of the ‘Third World’*, a fear of the country being comparable to what are considered to be lesser –

less economically developed, less safe, less sophisticated – countries. Much could be said about cultural insecurity, geographic isolation, colonial heritage, economic base, agriculture, rugby and the Kiwi character; but will not be here. The clear abundance of food in Aotearoa New Zealand, combined with a desire not to be ‘third-world’-like (that is, a country in which people suffer hardship due to national deficiencies), positions self-responsibilisation as a path of least resistance in constructing the problem of food insecurity.

Mentions of food insecurity are scarce in government documents. By far the most significant attention paid to the issue recently is a study published in 2009 funded by the Health Research Council and the Ministry of Health (Bowers *et al.* 2009). This focussed on options for *Enhancing Food Security and Physical Activity for Maori, Pacific and Low-Income Peoples*. In the absence of other government attention to food insecurity, the more recent statements by the Prime Minister offer insight into the government’s policy direction: “‘only the odd one or two’ kids turn up to school without lunch” (Johnston 2015, n.p.) and that “beneficiaries who resort to food banks do so out of their own ‘poor choices’ rather than because they cannot afford food” (Trevett 2011a, n.p.).

This forms an important starting point for the subsequent surveys of theories of depoliticisation in section 5.3. Based on this brief review of political rhetoric and the silence in official documents, the dominant problematisation representation of food insecurity is a self-responsibilisation of people who suffer food insecurity. This is consistent with neoliberal rationalities being hegemonic in Aotearoa New Zealand. The remainder of Chapter 5 will review different theoretical accounts concerned with describing the subjective and social-political context within which the problem of food insecurity – that is, the hegemonic problem representation – is constructed, considered and ineffectively contested. This commences with a discussion of the theoretical idea of depoliticisation.

### **5.3 Depoliticisation**

In this section, I will introduce and define the concept of depoliticisation. The concept is engaged in this chapter to offer some insight into the dynamics in a neoliberal society, which are theorised as a possible explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Depoliticisation is not a particularly widely discussed idea. Flinders and Buller (2006a, 294) assert that, “[w]ith very few exceptions the depoliticisation literature has remained the terrain of Sartori’s (1970) ‘unconscious thinker’”. That is, the concept has been used without being thoroughly

defined. An instance of such usage relevant to this thesis is Riches' (1997a, 46): "to the extent that charity has attempted to meet the needs of hungry people, hunger has been depoliticised and ignored by the state". Supporting this observation, Foster *et al.* (2014, 226, emphasis in original) remark that "depoliticisation appears to be a process which is far easier to pin down empirically than conceptually... we all agree that it is happening, we're just not entirely agreed on *what* precisely is happening". In order to move beyond these brief mentions of the concept and engage in some honing of the concept I want to draw upon a range of contributions to discussions of depoliticisation, many drawn from a special issue of *Policy & Politics*<sup>21</sup>.

Foster *et al.* (2014) distinguish two broad definitions of depoliticisation, though they emphasise that these are not mutually exclusive. The first and narrower definition is 'governmental' depoliticisation, an understanding that utilises a structural analysis of contemporary government. Recent work has included several analyses addressing macro-level economic management (Burnham 2001, 2011, 2014; Jessop 2003, 2014). This definition understands depoliticisation as a "governing strategy", "*the process of placing at one remove the political character of decision making*" (Burnham 2001, 128, emphasis in original). As a governing strategy, Flinders and Wood (2014, 135) suggest that depoliticisation has "evolved as the dominant model of statecraft in the twenty-first century". Accompanying this is the rise of depoliticisation as a concept of significant importance within analyses of modern governance (Flinders and Buller 2006a; Foster *et al.* 2014).

The second and broader definition of depoliticisation is essentially spatial, involving the contraction of where "'politics'/political agency can occur" (Foster *et al.* 2014, 227). Compared to the governmental definition, this spatial definition sees depoliticisation as "not necessarily or exclusively an activity or tool of government", and focuses instead on the "exploration of the relationship between processes of depoliticisation and (re)politicisation" (Foster *et al.* 2014, 227). A body of literature produced by the work of human geographers has much to offer from this angle.

It is crucial to recognise that "the politics remains" in depoliticisation however it is defined (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 296). The activity of depoliticisation as 'statecraft' is itself political in nature (Burnham 2001), because the basic intent is the shifting of blame away from the government (Foster *et al.* 2014). Burnham characterises this "distancing effect" as an attempt to maintain "a level of *governing competence*" in the eyes of the voting public (Burnham 2001, 127, 129,

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<sup>21</sup> *Policy & Politics* 42 (2), 2014.



emphasis in original). If the activity of governmental depoliticisation is political, then so too are depoliticised areas, concerns or issues. Indeed, these are “perhaps most political” in being constructed or labelled as existing outside of (legitimate) political concern (Butler 1994 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 237). Foster *et al.* (2014, 230) argue that “depoliticisation amounts only to the illusion of the removal of both politics and the state”. Their ideas will be examined in more detail the next section (5.4).

I have introduced the idea of depoliticisation in this thesis with very specific intent. I want to use it to explore an aspect of the work done by neoliberal governmentality: to name, grasp and tease out the way in which its operation engages with deprivation in rich liberal democracies, specifically with food insecurity. Definitions of depoliticisation will now be reviewed, to contextualise and position the use of a modified governmental definition of depoliticisation in the explanation built in this chapter.

Foster *et al.* (2014, 229) express concern about a more general, spatial definition of depoliticisation engendering the imagining of politics as occurring “somewhere ‘out there’” and

the potential problems that can arise if the definition of depoliticisation becomes too closely linked to the definition of ‘politics’, while at the same time the definition of politics becomes too closely related to ideas of choice, contingency, collective action and deliberation, rather than more directly linked to the formal and informal exercise of power<sup>22</sup>.

The use of a definition of depoliticisation in this thesis which foregrounds power relations – ‘the formal and informal exercise of power’ is supported by: (1) Foster *et al.*s’ concerns; (2) the observation that in depoliticisation the politics, and often the state as well, remain; and (3) the strong indication of empirical evidence reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4 of the significant role of political economic structures, which might be said to codify power relations, in producing vulnerability to food insecurity in rich liberal democracies.

The concept of depoliticisation, focused on power relations, has most often been applied to structural analysis of governments’ manoeuvring to maintain an appearance of “governing competence” (Burnham 2001, 127). Flinders and Buller review the use of depoliticisation to provide a summative definition:

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<sup>22</sup> Wood and Flinders (2014) offer a model of politics based on Hay (2007) as a definition to make clear what constitutes *depoliticisation*. This may not sit well with a conception of neoliberal governmentality as significant in depoliticisation, with its analysis of transformations rather than transitions or removals.

*the range of tools, mechanisms and institutions through which politicians can attempt to move to an indirect governing relationship and/or seek to persuade the demos that they can no longer be reasonably held responsible for a certain issue, policy field or specific decision.* (2006a, 295-6, emphasis in original)

They describe three tactics used by governments to implement depoliticisation (Flinders and Buller 2006a, see page 299 for the summary drawn on here). Institutional depoliticisation involves the establishment of a ‘principal–agent relationship’ between a minister and an ‘independent’ agency, such as the Independent Police Complaints Authority in Aotearoa New Zealand. Rule-based depoliticisation involves the “adoption of explicit rules into the decision-making process”, such as George Osborne’s proposal to require UK government budgets to deliver a surplus under ‘normal’ economic conditions (Robinson 2015). Preference-shaping depoliticisation involves the adoption and espousal of a rhetorical position which “seeks to portray certain issues as beyond the control of national politicians” (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 299). These descriptions position the government as a purposive and agentic actor deploying depoliticisation to its own ends: ‘squeezing out’ “not politics per se, but rather the responsibility, blame, costs and discretion associated with policy making” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 229).

Depoliticisation is theorised here as a dynamic in neoliberal societies – societies in which neoliberal political rationality is hegemonic. As such, it is not a ‘stand-alone’ phenomenon so much as an integral aspect of a set of dynamics that characterise governing practices founded in a neoliberal political rationality. These can be approached using Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality.

Having now introduced the idea of depoliticisation, the next section (5.4) will introduce the concept of neoliberal governmentality. The subsequent section (5.5) will develop the concept of depoliticisation, with reference to neoliberal governmentality and other theoretical elements, to examine one possible theoretical explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **5.4 Neoliberal Governmentality**

This section will describe the concept of governmentality in the first sub-section (5.4.1). The second sub-section (5.4.2) details the assumption that neoliberal citizen subjectivities are hegemonic in Aotearoa New Zealand. Finally, sub-section 5.4.3 examines neoliberal governmentality.

#### 5.4.1 Governmentality

Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality is useful for analysing how governance operates and behaviour is regulated. I turn to it here as a possible way to explain the gap between empirical evidence of structural influences, specifically the neoliberal political economy, and a lack of policy change and significant public support for such change. This section explores the usefulness of the concept of governmentality for this purpose and provides a conceptual background for describing *neoliberal* governmentality in some detail.

Dean (1999, 16) describes two broad meanings of governmentality. The first and broadest meaning is the way in which government, the management of human activity, is conceived, considered and subsequently carried out (Dean 1999, 10-18). It is concerned with collective thought and action within "our organized ways of doing things, our *regimes of practices*" (Dean 1999, 17-18, emphasis in original). The second meaning of governmentality, "a historically specific version" of the general definition, is focused on the "emergence of a distinctly new form of thinking about and exercising power" in Western culture (Dean 1999, 16, 19). This is the understanding relevant to neoliberal governmentality, and is the one referred to from this point.

Foucault defines governmentality as:

The ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections. The calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target populations, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security. (Foucault et al. 2007 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 232-3)

This definition requires some unpacking. There are several novel aspects to this form of governmentality. The first is the shift from the exercise of power by government to the operation of governance: "a broader configuration of state and key elements in civil society" (Harvey 2005, 88). While this operation of power may be less visible, its subtlety means that it permeates "all spheres and processes of human life" (Foster *et al.* 2014, 233). The second is the object of this governance – populations, known or conceived of through statistics, rather than discrete individuals.

The third is the consequent need to "govern through a particular register, that of the *economy*" (Dean 1999, 19). Power is exercised to regulate behaviour so as to use and optimise the

wellbeing and capacities of “living individuals”, members of a population contributing to an economy (Dean 1999, 20), “through welfare narratives” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 233). The final novel aspect of this form of governmentality is the ‘apparatuses of security’. These are formed by “those institutions and practices concerned to defend, maintain and secure a national population and those that secure the economic, demographic and social processes that are found to exist within [a] population”, from armies and police forces to “health, education and welfare systems” (Dean 1999, 20).

A description of Foucault’s understanding of power might offer some clarity here. Foucault conceived of power as diffuse and productive. Power is diffuse because it is not something exercised in a top-down fashion, but rather a web – between individuals, groups and institutions. Power is productive because it operates to regulate people through discipline. In the concept of discipline, Foucault combines two definitions: discipline is both “punishment” and “a body of skills and knowledges” (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb 2000, 50). In the process of making sense of themselves, people refer to various bodies of knowledge, so that “discipline and knowledge ‘make’ us certain kinds of people” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, 50). Discipline provides the means to make ourselves in particular ways, through particular bodies of knowledge, and this moulds whom we are. Most often, discipline operates without overt coercive force as individuals discipline themselves in order to benefit, “to be able to operate effectively” in the economy of the day (Danaher *et al.* 2000, 51).

It might be helpful now to return to a very basic understanding of what governmentality is: a mentality regarding the operation of governance. Lemke (2001) expands this idea by describing two aspects of ‘innovative potential’ in the concept of governmentality. One is to make clear that “it is not possible to study the technologies of power without an analysis of the political rationality underpinning them” (Lemke 2001, 191). This highlights that governmentality has two sides – rationalities, which provide the basis for governing and for government, and technologies, which provide the means of action for governance.

On the rationality side of governmentality, a mentality or mode of thought, such as neoliberalism, defines the terms on which power can be mobilised. It *represents* government, for instance through the “delineation of concepts, the specification of objects and borders, the provision of arguments and justifications, etc.” (Lemke 2001, 191). Thus, a particular governmentality “enables a problem to be addressed and offers certain strategies for

solving/handling the problem” (Lemke 2001, 191). On the technologies side, governmentality, a mentality or mode of thought, “structures specific forms of *intervention*” (Lemke 2001, 191, emphasis in original). Governmentality is “a form of ‘intellectual technology’ that renders particular aspects of social and economic life ‘knowable’ in specific ways” (Larner 1997b, 13). This rendering produces a scene with which “political technologies” can engage (Lemke 2001, 191). These political technologies are “understood to include agencies, procedures, institutions, legal forms, etc., that are intended to enable us to govern the objects and subjects of a political rationality” (Lemke 2001, 191).

The other innovative aspect of governmentality that Lemke identifies has to do with the broadness of governance that is associated with a particular *mentality* of government. Governance, informed by a particular mentality, is a process that occurs at many levels. A traditional idea of ‘government’ as the activities of the state and its formal agencies does not capture the breadth of conduct influenced by a particular governmentality. Governmentality describes government as an activity which “ranges from ‘governing the self’ to ‘governing others’” (Lemke 2001, 191). It describes the manner in which the ‘conduct of conduct’ occurs, by the state, between peers, and within oneself.

For clarity, the term governance will be used to describe the activity of government in this broad sense, with the term government reserved for formal government. Lemke (2001, 191) asserts that “in his history of governmentality Foucault endeavours to show how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence”. This foregrounds the significance of individual subjectivities as specific sites at which governance in keeping with a particular governing mentality occurs.

Governmentality is a useful perspective to engage in forming the explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is useful for examining how the conduct of individuals, groups, institutions and government is shaped in particular ways. It foregrounds the basis on which power operates, its mentality, and what this mentality produces – from institutions, to forms of regulation, to ways of being. It situates food insecurity in a food secure country within the social-political context of the hegemonic neoliberal political rationality; a context which may be significant to the generation of vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The concept of governmentality makes possible the tracing of links between a particular way of thinking, a neoliberal political rationality, and how food insecurity

comes to be. The particular details of neoliberal governmentality – the technologies of governance paired with neoliberal political rationality – will be examined in sub-section 5.4.3. Before this, the significance of neoliberal political rationality regarding citizens’ subjectivities in Aotearoa New Zealand will be discussed (5.4.2).

#### *5.4.2 Neoliberal Political Rationality in Aotearoa New Zealand*

In this chapter, I position neoliberal citizen subjectivities as significant in the production of food insecurity as a depoliticised issue. The idea that neoliberal political rationality has come to influence citizens’ subjectivities is not uncontested. Roper (2005, 198) argues that early neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand was “not popular” and argues that this continues to be the case. However, I suggest that in Aotearoa New Zealand, neoliberalism has developed to be what Wendy Brown describes as a “normative order of reason” (2015, 9). This is supported by several publications.

Nairn *et al.* (2012) found that *The Children of Rogernomics* – the generation of high school leavers born following the neoliberalisation of the economy in Aotearoa New Zealand – draw on neoliberal reason in constructing their identity and their understanding of the world. Hackell (2013, 129) describes the emergence of a ‘neoliberal citizenship regime’ of antagonism between taxpayer-citizens and “a non-taxpaying anti-community of welfare beneficiaries” in the 1990s, accompanied by the development of an “unquestioned centre of political space” around neoliberal principles in the political landscape.

Writing about deprivation, specifically child poverty, Boston (2014, 962) observes that “[f]or a country which once took pride in being comparatively egalitarian and, more particularly, a great place to bring up children, the tolerance of much greater child poverty is surprising”. This is indicative of a broad “shift in attitudes” and a decline in support for egalitarian values amongst the population of Aotearoa New Zealand (Boston 2014, 976). This body of research suggests that the majority of the citizenry have ‘taken on’ neoliberal political rationality to some extent – though there is a need for further investigation. Support for this idea also comes from the observation that the three election victories of the National Party in 2008, 2011 and 2014 suggest a degree of acceptance by the voting public of neoliberalism, if not the finer points of the neoliberal policy regime.

Unfortunately, this thesis is not a place where there is time or resources to analyse popular resistance to neoliberalism in Aotearoa New Zealand in depth. However, both recent research

and the blunt evidence of election outcomes suggest a social-political situation in which citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand have become acclimatised to the ideological tenets of neoliberalism and their manifestation in policy. Therefore, I will proceed with the assumption that this body of literature is accurate: citizen subjectivities in Aotearoa New Zealand have been influenced and shaped by neoliberal ideas in a way that could be called hegemonic.

I consider hegemony as Stuart Hall (2011, 727) describes it: “No project achieves a position of permanent ‘hegemony’. It is a process, not a state of being. No victories are final. Hegemony has constantly to be ‘worked on’, maintained, renewed and revised”. Hall views neoliberalism as constituting a “hegemonic project” in the UK, not least because of its “impact on common sense and everyday behaviour, [and] restructuring of the social architecture” (2011, 728). The same can be said for Aotearoa New Zealand. This assumption of the hegemonic status of neoliberal political rationality (and the implications of such an assumption in understanding food security) will be returned to and re-examined later in this thesis.

One prominent author who advocates a more post-structural approach is Larner (2000), who stresses that a solely structural understanding or analysis of neoliberalism is reductive. Neoliberal political rationality influences not only the content of policy but also the ideas that people in and outside of government have about the way that populations ought to be governed – ethical and political ideas. Brown (2015, 9) observes that over time this influence has developed into a “widely and deeply disseminated governing rationality”, influencing expectations and norms about the proper role of government, what constitutes legitimate government action (and inaction): a “normative order of reason”. I suggest that this dynamic can be characterised as the influence of neoliberal political rationality on citizens’ subjectivities – on how people see and understand the world.

An important caveat here is that ‘neoliberalism’ should not be considered to be totally coherent (Hall 2011; Larner 2000). It is important to acknowledge the simplification inherent in addressing neoliberalism or neoliberal political rationality as an entity or dynamic in itself, rather than as neoliberalisms or rationalities existing as they are manifest in practices and subject positions in specific times and places. Having said that, it is important to be able to address the dynamic(s) which have led to a situation in which “popular thinking and the systems of calculation in daily life offer very little friction to the passage of [neoliberal] ideas” (Hall 2011, 728) in rich liberal democracies.

These dynamics constitute what Hall calls the hegemonic neoliberal project, and what I am calling the hegemonic influence of neoliberal political rationality. In this chapter, I address these dynamics, with a level of abstraction for practical purposes, as constructing food insecurity as a depoliticised issue. This is one explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand, relating the influence of neoliberal political rationality on citizens' subjectivities to vulnerability to food insecurity. Despite not being thoroughly grounded in a specific time and place, this thesis does usefully engage ideas significant to multiple neoliberalism(s) and puts to work the concept of neoliberalism as an abstract but characteristic set of ideas influencing people's attitudes and beliefs, and so behaviour and practices.

Margaret Thatcher articulated the importance of citizen subjectivities to her neoliberal project: "Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul" (Butt 1981, n.p.). The neoliberal reforms in Aotearoa New Zealand may or may not have had such a purposive orientation. However neoliberal reforms began, it seems that the public, and not just a number of influential policy makers, have absorbed the ideas and also the spirit of the 'free market' philosophy – neoliberal political rationality. This is significant for food insecurity because of the space and sustenance that the social-political situation provides for a particular construction of food insecurity, with strong implications for what responses are possible.

#### *5.4.3 Neoliberal Governmentality and Market Governance*

"Neoliberalism constitutes a new mode of 'governmentality', a manner, or a mentality, in which people are governed and govern themselves" (Read 2009, 29). Following Lemke's (2001) description of the two sides of governmentality, I characterise neoliberal governmentality as a set of political technologies enacting governance on the basis of a neoliberal political rationality<sup>23</sup>. The operation of neoliberal governmentality pairs logics of governance of neoliberal political rationality with particular technologies of governance.

Neoliberal governmentality "works through a constructed separation between the political and the economic, whereby the latter takes primacy" (Lemke 2002 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 235). Put another way, the unfettered operation of markets and individual freedom are central to both the

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<sup>23</sup> Again, neoliberal political rationality is not constant across place and time. Larner (2000, 10) denies that neoliberalism is a "coherent corpus" of ideas, as "different threads of this ideological formation" are emphasised in different instances. Similarly, Hall (2011) observes that neoliberalism evolves. Despite the variety of neoliberalisms, it is not unreasonable to remark on basic features of neoliberal political rationalities which are widely apparent in its manifestations.



rationality and technologies of neoliberal governmentality. In forming the theoretical explanation in this chapter, I foreground neoliberal logics of the market and technologies of market governance. This is because the normal (and normative) way to access food in Aotearoa New Zealand is through markets, and the dominant problem representation (described in section 5.2) draws on the idea of individual freedom to act in markets. In addition, constraints in this thesis prohibit a wide survey of elements of neoliberal political rationality and their relations to food insecurity.

As noted in Chapter 4, a major feature of neoliberal political rationality is the demand for a minimalist state, a state subsumed to the operation of markets. With the privileging of ‘economics’, conceived of as a distinct arena from politics and society, “neo-liberal governmentality describes a process which places market based logics above all other paradigms” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 234). Considering Larner’s (2000, 6) assertion that neoliberalism “is both a political discourse about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance”, neoliberal governmentality can be said to be focused on the operation of ‘free’ markets in both instances.

Read (2009, 29) remarks that as “a form of governmentality, neoliberalism would seem paradoxically to govern without governing”, in keeping with neoliberal political rationality. Foster *et al.* (2014) emphasise that this is an appearance only, aligning with the façade of the removal of politics in depoliticisation, an idea which will be expanded in the next section (5.5). Neoliberal governmentality encourages “both institutions and individuals to conform to the norms of the market”, operating through what is often termed “market governance” (Larner 2000, 12).

McCluskey (2003, 786, 793) describes neoliberal political rationality as assuming “a prepolitical (or at least apolitical) market”, best paired with the state as a “value-neutral facilitator of individual choices”. As Wood and Flinders (2014, 160) note, the apparent removal of ethics and contingency here echoes Francis Fukayama’s (1992) thesis regarding the “end of history” with the pairing of markets and liberal democracy. Larner (1997a, 373) argues that market relations, rather than being driven by “impersonal imperatives... are relations of governance in that they are attempts both to constitute and fundamentally to transform the subject's capacity to act”. Therefore “[w]hat we observe today is not a diminishment or a

reduction of state sovereignty and planning capacities but a displacement from formal to informal techniques of government” (Lemke 2002 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 231).

The concept of market governance facilitates an understanding of “neoliberal governmental intervention [as] no less dense, frequent, active, and continuous than any other system of governmental rationality. Only the domains and methods of governmental intervention were new” (Oksala 2011 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 231). The appearance of a reduction in governing relations with the proliferation of market governance is supported by the regulation of behaviour, the conduct of conduct, operating in a non-overt manner:

As a mode of governmentality, neoliberalism operates on interests, desires, and aspirations rather than through rights and obligations; it does not directly mark the body, as sovereign power, or even curtail actions, as disciplinary power; rather, it acts on the conditions of actions. (Read 2009, 29)

Perhaps the most tangible ‘conditions of actions’ can be located in markets. These are arenas that produce self-regulation, a political technology of particular importance in neoliberal governmentality. In line with the rationality which produces this ‘arm’s-length’ mode of governance:

the neo-liberal citizen is imbued with a seemingly enhanced capacity and responsibility for managing choices and decisions around a number of issues formerly managed directly by the state. Yet, the same citizen is at the same time disciplined through formal and informal systems of government which function to imbue the individual with an equally enhanced capacity to incur the risk of making the ‘wrong’ choices, given that the consequences of their actions are to be borne by the subject alone. (Foster *et al.* 2014, 232)

Rose and Miller (2010 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 234) remark on a realignment between political rationality and self-regulation in the operation of neoliberal governmentality, as “individuals can be governed by their freedom to choose”. This follows the construction of notions of “‘naturally’ ‘lean, fit, flexible (and) autonomous’ individuals, communities and institutions” as good by the governing mentality of neoliberal political rationality (Lemke 2002 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 234). Those who do not discipline themselves to acceptable standards are failures – not within any kind of system; they have failed themselves, and are solely responsible for their own situation. The freedom of the market thus comes to constitute a means of regulating behaviour. Read (2009, 29) emphasises that “the freedoms of the market, are not the outside of politics, of governmentality[...] but rather are an integral element of its strategy”.

Neoliberal governmentality works “largely to construct subjects who make effective workforces and consumers, while marginalising and excluding those who do not” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 233). The marginalisation and exclusion of those who do not make effective workforces and consumers by neoliberal governmentality is of significant importance to the patterns in suffering described in Chapter 4; it represents the disciplining effect of market governance.

I will conclude this explication of neoliberal governmentality with an evaluation by Lemke that brings together neoliberal political rationality and self-responsibilisation:

the theoretical strength of the concept of governmentality consists of the fact that it construes neo-liberalism not just as ideological rhetoric or as a political-economic reality, but above all as *a political project that endeavours to create a social reality that it suggests already exists*. Neo-liberalism is a political rationality that tries to render the social domain economic and to link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for ‘personal responsibility’ and ‘self-care’. (2001, 203)

## **5.5 Developing Depoliticisation**

So far, this chapter has supported the importance of considering citizens’ subjectivities, characterised the dominant problem representation of food insecurity in this country, and introduced the concepts of depoliticisation and neoliberal governmentality. Bringing these elements together, I suggest that one possible explanation for how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand is the depoliticisation of deprivation. This section develops this potential explanation with a survey of ways that deprivation may be depoliticised.

Sub-section 5.5.1 describes how depoliticisation may characterise a significant aspect of the work done by neoliberal governmentality. Sub-section 5.5.2 describes how depoliticisation may involve the transferal of political risk from governments to individuals. Finally, sub-section 5.5.3 engages the third dimension of Watt’s and Bohle’s (1993) space of vulnerability.

### ***5.5.1 Neoliberal Governmentality: Conceptual Common Ground***

Bringing the theoretical concepts of depoliticisation and governmentality into the same space around food insecurity raises some interesting questions as to how they might work together to create theoretical insight. Foster *et al.* (2014, 226, 238) describe depoliticisation as a vital concept for “understanding contemporary patterns of governance”, in particular neoliberal governmentality, which sees the proliferation of market governance and the “ostensible ‘rolling back’ of the state”. These transformations should not be accepted uncritically. Foster *et al.* (2014) remark that it is easy:

to be tempted into an assumption that, as the state has seemingly either withdrawn altogether or partially dislocated itself from direct control over a wide range of policy areas, this has led to a genuine retreat of the state and, by correlation, an overall shrinking of the space within which formal political activity occurs. (2014, 230)

They argue that depoliticisation, that is, the appearance of the removal of political power, is an essential “myth to perpetuate neo-liberal governmentality” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 238). This is because neoliberal political rationality requires a minimal state.

If depoliticisation works to adjust appearances regarding political power, the operation of governmentality carries out a similar process. Governmentality operates to shape the state, or rather to enable the definition of its shape, as Foucault describes it:

...[Governmentality constitutes] the tactics of government that allow the continual *definition of what should or should not fall within the state's domain*, what is public and what private, what is and what is not within the state's competence, and so on. (Foucault 2008 in Jessop 2014, 211, italics added)

Jessop (2014, 211) characterises governmentality as operating to depoliticise some issues: it (re-)defines “some issues as private, technical or managerial”, which functions to remove them from “overtly political decision making and contentious politics”. Such redefinitions by neoliberal governmentality should be understood as enacting not so much a removal as a displacement. Specifically, this is a displacement from the political arena to the arena of markets: governing relations are (re)defined in “a marketised, as opposed to a politicised, space” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 231).

I suggest that such a displacement does not *a priori* depoliticise an issue. The characterisation of the institution of markets in the previous section (5.4.2) is pertinent here: neoliberal political rationality assumes “a prepolitical (or at least apolitical) market” (McCluskey 2003, 793). The depoliticisation of deprivation occurs through the displacement of issues of deprivation from a politicised space to a marketised space, through the “displacement from formal to informal techniques of government” (Lemke 2002 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 231). Here again, appearances should be critiqued. I have already argued that markets are not pre- or apolitical, being institutions embedded in a set of social and power relations. Larner (1997a, 373) asserts that the ‘impersonal imperatives’ of market forces are actually “relations of governance [which] are attempts both to constitute and fundamentally to transform the subject's capacity to act”.

Both neoliberal governmentality and depoliticisation involve the re-drawing of boundaries to effect a transformation in relations – not a withdrawal of governing relations. Depoliticisation

does not involve any kind of “non-politics, de-politics or anti-politics”, just as neoliberal governmentality does not involve the retreat, erasure or shrinking of governance (Foster *et al.* 2014, 238). Neoliberal governmentality *transforms* governing relations and the concept of depoliticisation captures the effects of this transformation as it affects and constitutes particular issues.

#### 5.5.2 Self-responsibilisation: Complicit Politicisation and Market Governance

Jessop (2014) describes self-responsibilisation as the translation of issues from governmental to individual responsibility through conditions created by the state. This activity of translation is how depoliticisation can be understood as a “technology of government” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 236) – a specific mechanism through which behaviour is regulated or conduct is conducted. The primacy of markets under neoliberal governmentality, following neoliberal political rationality, constitutes people as actors in a market. Their successes or failures are not a politicised or collective matter, but the outcome of their own individual success or failure within a market. Reasons for peoples’ difficulties in succeeding in market settings, particularly structural, politically inflected ones – class, ethnicity, gender – are disregarded through the focus on the individual and their apparently individual achievements or failures.

One illustration of this is unemployment. Walters (1996, 199) persuasively argues for *The Demise of Unemployment*, not as a phenomena, due to increased employment, through the loss of the “salience as a theoretical and administrative entity” of the concept. This trend occurs in the context of the evolving manner in which work is governed – how it is defined and experienced. In this vein, Jessop (2003) asserts that:

unemployment is no longer seen in terms of a *shortage of jobs* and hence of a need to manage aggregate demand in order to secure *full employment* but is interpreted instead in workfarist terms as the product of a *shortfall in job-readiness* that is reflected in a lack of *full employability*”. (2003, 13, emphasis in original)

Using Bacchi’s (2009) language again, the similarities between the social conditions of unemployment and food insecurity are visible. The social conditions themselves have not substantially changed but the representations of these as problems certainly has. Responsibility has shifted from the state as manager of aggregate demand for employment to individuals as managers of their own employability, and from the state as manager of food production and distribution/access to individuals as managers of their own access to enough nutritious food.

Burnham (2001, 137) argues that depoliticisation is “one of the most potent forms of ideological mobilisation”. Understanding depoliticisation as an aspect of neoliberal governmentality supports this idea – the political significance of suffering is denied even as it is erased. Market governance, given the supposed neutrality of the ‘impersonal imperatives’ of market forces, foregrounds the freedoms of individuals. This freedom in an (apparently) unconstrained arena functions to make individuals wholly self-responsible. In this way, neoliberal governmentality regulates individuals through the freedom that they have to act in markets – their freedom to choose (Rose and Miller 1992 in Foster *et al.* 2014). Poor outcomes from a neutral market must originate from poor inputs – from people suffering the bad outcomes. Such logic ignores the “limitations of authentic choice” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 234) in markets as well as the privilege and deprivation that people carry with them into markets.

As well as self-responsibility, neoliberal governmentality operates to reduce the scope of possible concern about social conditions by situating them within marketised spaces. Thus, social conditions such as household food insecurity are “constructed as economic issues (rather than political or moral problems, demanding political and moral solutions)” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 234). Possibilities for government action are thus informed by economic logics – ‘too costly’, ‘inefficient’ – with problem representation deflecting moral (and so political) considerations.

To summarise the development of self-responsibilisation under neoliberal governmentality: (1) neoliberal political rationality demands the (apparent) ‘retreat’ or ‘roll-back’ of the state; (2) neoliberal governmentality transforms governing relations and draws on depoliticisation to redefine ‘what is and what is not within the state’s competence’; and (3) these transformations isolate individuals, erasing power relations and social positions, and foregrounding self-responsibility.

With a focus on power relations, the effect of self-responsibilisation can be seen as the transferral of “responsibility for a policy domain” to individuals or agencies (Foster *et al.* 2014, 236). Foster *et al.* (2014, 236, emphasis in original) describe the “*complicit politicisation*” of individuals as a consequence of “state depoliticisation”. As market governance overshadows ‘formal’ government – the overt operation of the state – this apparent erasure of power relations rearticulates individuals’ capacity to enact change:

[...]the space for choice and contingency is gradually reoriented to the individual away from arenas more traditionally understood as ‘political’. However, this does not mean

that politics is negated but rather that it is renegotiated and transferred to the subject.  
(Foster *et al.* 2014, 237)

Politicisation is ‘complicit’ because politicised individuals are “unlikely to engage in any significant, paradigm shifting deliberation and more likely to seek to achieve the political objectives which run in line with the governmental (and therefore state) rationality of the time” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 236).

The dynamic of depoliticisation as an aspect of neoliberal governmentality, then, includes the renegotiation and transferral of politics on to the individual as the state ‘rolls back’ (Foster *et al.* 2014). If politics shapes “the exercise of state power” (Jessop 2014, 209), then neoliberal political rationality in the operation of neoliberal governmentality depoliticises areas of state responsibility. This responsibility is transferred to individuals, communities, agencies, charities on contract, and other small-scale, de-centralised and newly accountable actors.

The governmental definition of depoliticisation understands that “what gets ‘squeezed out’ by de-politicisation, is not politics per se, but rather the responsibility, blame, costs and discretion associated with policy making” (Foster *et al.* 2014, 229). Thus, the complicit politicisation of individuals involves the transfer of ‘responsibility, blame, costs and discretion’ to individuals. Market governance foregrounds individuals’ freedom to choose, and disregards extra-market influences on people’s ability to participate ‘correctly’.

Analysed in this fashion, the depoliticisation of food insecurity is fundamentally political, and strongly tied to neoliberal political rationality. Food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand can be explained as a political product of neoliberal political rationality: it is suffered collectively and in a patterned way, as a function of structural power relations; and it is depoliticised (and individuals politicised), as a function of neoliberal governmentality and the formation of citizens’ subjectivities. Thus, the economic marginalisation described as produced by the operation of the neoliberal political economy in Chapter 4 can be explained as sustained by the social marginalisation of individuals and groups by the operation of neoliberal governmentality, market governance and depoliticisation.

### *5.5.3 Neoliberal Governmentality and the Space of Vulnerability*

Watts and Bohle (1993) describe empowerment or enfranchisement as relating to political rights. In this context, the concept of depoliticisation may be an integral element of the space of vulnerability to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Political rights exist in the social-

political context I have described as being constituted in citizens' subjectivities. Political rights are an avenue for groups to claim and access public resources to be food secure – to maintain and defend entitlements to food (Watts and Bohle 1993). Watts and Bohle's (1993) description of the mechanisms by which this occurs are less applicable to Aotearoa New Zealand as a rich liberal democracy, so I will turn to the ideas of McCluskey (2003) and Hackell (2007, 2013) to interrogate empowerment and enfranchisement as a dimension of vulnerability to food insecurity in this country. Here, too, the economic marginalisation of particular groups by the structures of the neoliberal political economy in Aotearoa New Zealand described in Chapter 4 are explained as potentially being underwritten by an equivalent social marginalisation of particular groups.

Watts and Bohle (1993, 199) describe the importance of the empowerment dimension of the space of vulnerability: "political rights are... central to the process by which claims can be made over public resources as a basis for food security, and to maintain and defend entitlements". Groups that lack political capital are unable to access such resources, their claims being seen as illegitimate. Such groups, by definition, lack political power, so that food insecurity is a form of "violence imposed on the powerless" (Watts and Bohle 1993, 119).

These socially marginalised groups may align with those identified and described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 respectively. If so, these groups could be understood as vulnerable to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand through their being disempowered and disenfranchised, politically silenced through social marginalisation. Possible foundations for such marginalisation are described by McCluskey (2003) and Hackell (2007, 2013). These will now be examined in turn.

McCluskey (2003, see section I(B),) identifies the operation of a 'neoliberal double standard' regarding the differing interests of groups participating in markets. This double standard is underwritten by the neoliberal concept of the impartial free market that produces outcomes based on (personal) merit. The idea that markets are historically contingent social constructions, with rules enforced which accord with the dominant rationality of the social context in which markets are embedded, is not accounted for. The 'free' market of neoliberalism is a particular set of market conditions that is rarely met in practice and is skewed by the social conditions that surround it – the privileges and deprivations that individuals bear. Neither social context nor a person's socially defined baggage (such as race or gender) are left 'at the door' of any market.



These troubles with the neoliberal concept of markets aside, or perhaps on top of them, is the (de)legitimation of claims on public resources by neoliberal political rationality. The neoliberal double standard:

identifies some people's interest in increasing their share of the pie as part of an efficient and naturalized market that benefits the public, while others' interests in increasing their share of the pie are instead labelled as redistributive, and therefore potentially harmful to the public well-being. (McCluskey 2003, 806)

The belief that “redistributive policies will affirmatively increase overall costs by producing incentives for further inefficiency” means that assisting the powerless – already disempowered, whether by birth, bad luck, incompetence within particular market conditions, or their socially-defined role in the market – is thought to be bad for society (McCluskey 2003, 805). Riches (1997b, 5) remarks that “[i]f the right to food security is to be constrained by people's ability to participate fully in the marketplace, particularly in societies which show little inclination to support full employment, the future is one of increasing risk and vulnerability”.

McCluskey (2003, 816) extends observation of the neoliberal double standard to an “underlying citizenship question: Whose ability to get more of what they want by shifting costs to others should count as a societal gain, and whose should count as a private gain as an expense of others?”. The hegemonic answer to this is provided by the primacy of the market in neoliberal political rationality: “By making the market stand for the public gain, neoliberalism implicitly confers superior citizenship status on those centrally identified with the market” (McCluskey 2003, 816). These good citizens are employers and investors, those already powerful within the particular market conditions encouraged by neoliberal political rationality, as well as in the society this rationality shapes.

Aligning with McCluskey's argument in Aotearoa New Zealand, Susan St John argues that:

[t]he choice between progressive taxation and universal family benefits, pensions, student support, health on the one hand, and flatter low tax rates on the rich and abated targeted payments for the poor on the other, is a question of who pays, not how much. (in Kelsey 1993, 68)

This draws attention to aspects of the neoliberal policy regime that have determined the (il)legitimacy of different groups' claims over public resources, and highlights the human costs of tax cuts paid for by a loss of support for the less powerful in neoliberal market-saturated society.

This analysis of empowerment or enfranchisement is supported by what Hackell (2007, 2013) describes as a neoliberal citizenship regime in Aotearoa New Zealand. This regime emerged in the 1990s, apparent in the “citizenship discourses of the two main political parties”, and saw national unity reframed “around the identity of the taxpayer”, in opposition to a “non-taxpaying anti-community of welfare beneficiaries (Hackell 2013, 129,131). Again, McCluskey’s characterisation of neoliberal political rationality fits: “National’s [The National Party’s] discourse challenged the justice and fairness of redistributive taxation by constructing the contributors as not benefiting and the beneficiaries as not contributing” (Hackell 2013, 135). While the social condition of food insecurity might be said to be a pressing issue on an empirical basis, this is ultimately a judgement based on values.

I suggest that in Aotearoa New Zealand today, the other two dimensions of the space of vulnerability – entitlement and class – are founded on the constitution of empowerment and enfranchisement by neoliberal governmentality. Neoliberal political rationality erases the influence of social context on ‘free’ markets and delegitimises the claims of particular groups on public resources to be food secure. This is built on the ideological work done by neoliberal political rationality in rolling back government, and so apparently also governance, depoliticising the outcomes of market governance, and the complicit politicisation of individuals.

Watts and Bohle note that

[...]if the likelihood of deprivation is rooted in politics – which are inscribed in gender (patriarchal politics), work (production politics) and the public sphere (state politics) – because individuals and groups are powerless, then to the same extent their location in the ‘political space’ of vulnerability is determined by power and institutional relations. (Watts and Bohle 1993, 122)

The empirical data presented in Chapters 2 and 3 and characterised as structured in Chapter 4 link a person’s chances of being food insecure to their position within power and institutional relations: gender (women), work (unemployed and time-poor sole parents). The social marginalisation of (groups of) people who suffer food insecurity is one explanation for the continued stability of the political economic structures that drive vulnerability to food insecurity for those same groups of people.

## 5.6 Conclusions: The Problem of Depoliticisation

In this chapter I have reviewed the kinds of theoretical approaches that characterise a more post-structuralist narrative of the neoliberal turn. This has involved a consideration of neoliberal political rationality, neoliberal governmentality, citizens' subjectivities, market governance, and depoliticisation. Depoliticisation appears to be a potentially promising idea within the theorisation of the persistence or intractability of neoliberal political rationalities in the face of what appears to be at least challenging empirical evidence. I have proposed both developing and applying the idea of depoliticisation to the area of food insecurity, deprivation and vulnerability in the context of citizens' subjectivities.

I will now summarise the different ways in which depoliticisation might explain dynamics around food insecurity. First, depoliticisation is theoretically compatible with a necessarily reductive and abstract theorisation of neoliberal governmentality as operating in Aotearoa New Zealand. I explored depoliticisation in the context of theories of governmentality in order to examine whether it might operate within a wider theorisation of neoliberal governmentalities to explain the apparent lack of public concern over food security in Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, depoliticisation appears to provide a suitable characterisation of the dominant problem representation of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, described in section 5.2 as a self-responsibilisation. This can be generalised to the suggestion that neoliberal governmentalities construct multiple social conditions as issues of self-responsibility, producing the depoliticisation of deprivation. Third, depoliticisation integrates with Watts and Bohle's (1993) theorisation of political rights as a dimension of the space of vulnerability to food insecurity, affecting (particular) people's ability to access food.

Depoliticisation, then, appears to be a theoretically strong explanation. However, there has to date, been no attempt to actually apply it as a concept within a specific investigation of subjectivities or governmentalities. To pursue this potential explanation further, I will apply this idea, among others, in an investigation of how people involved in work concerning food insecurity actually think about the social condition. There are a number of possible ways in which this might play out. I may find a strong alignment between empirical evidence and subjective positioning. Or, it is possible that people in this group will reject the explanation of food insecurity as a "social and economic problem of lack of food due to financial deprivation" (Carter *et al.* 2011, 1469). I may find an alignment between individual thinking and wider

neoliberal governmentalities that depoliticise this area. Or, it is possible that these people will understand food insecurity as an issue of distributional justice “engaging broad questions of work and income distribution, food policy, agricultural practices, health and welfare reforms, nutrition education, charitable aid, community development and the role of the state and civil society” (Riches 1997e, 170). I may well find none of these rather neat characterisations of subjective positions.

This investigation may also offer some insight to the application of the concept of depoliticisation as an explanation for food insecurity in this chapter. For instance, does depoliticisation operate more as an initiative of government manoeuvring, as an artefact of the policy process or the political process, as part of neoliberal governmentality at the macro-level, or is it grounded in the subjectivities of individual neoliberal citizens? As depoliticisation has not been thoroughly applied to a particular issue as part of a more post-structural analysis, as I have in this chapter, or in the area of food insecurity, this research presents an opportunity to engage these questions and develop the concept in a more applied setting.

Chapter 6 describes the methodology, methods and particularities of practice that I used in investigating how people involved in work concerning food insecurity actually think about the social condition. Chapter 7 presents the results of this investigation. Chapter 8 examines these results and brings the theoretical arguments and explanations of Chapters 4 and 5 to bear on them. In Chapter 8, I will return to the idea of depoliticisation and attempt to respond to some questions raised by the theoretical approach taken in this chapter.

## Chapter 6 – Seeking Subjectivities: A Q Methodology Investigation

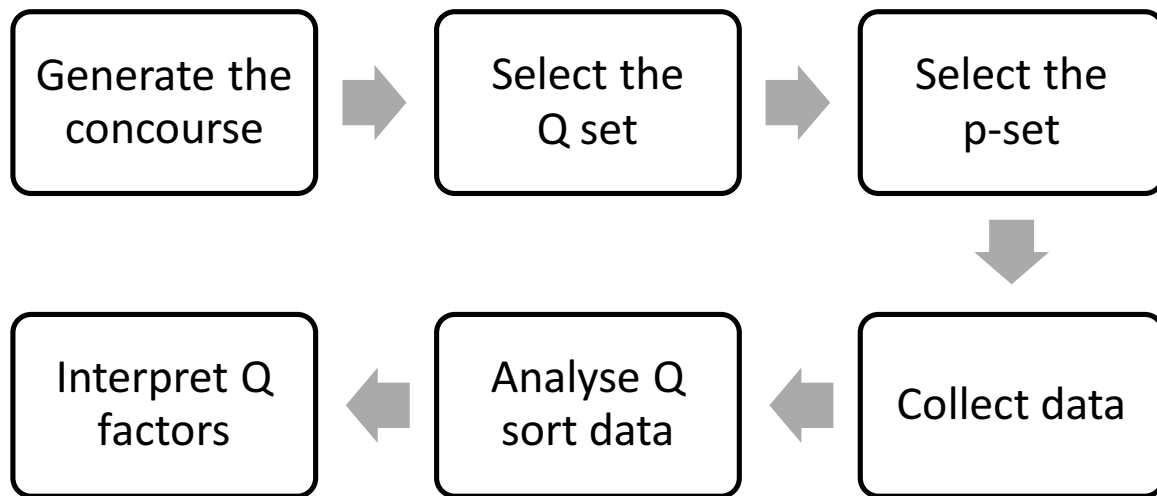
6		7	8
Methods & Methodology		Results	Conclusions
Rationale	Generating statements	Selecting statements	Selecting participants
Data collection	Data analysis		Room for improvement

In the previous chapter, I concluded that it would be highly useful to engage with how practitioners actually think about the neoliberalised worlds they inhabit – specifically in relation to food insecurity. To do this I am going to deploy Q methodology. This chapter will explain the structure of Q methodology, detail how the research was conducted, and describe the results.

### 6.1 Why Q Methodology?

Q methodology is a particularly appropriate way to research the social-political situation in which food security comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides a “structured framework” to identify subjective viewpoints or positioning on a particular issue (Plummer 2012, n.p.). The significance of the social-political situation in which food security comes to be was argued for in Chapter 5. As a social-political situation exists only as it exists in subjective positioning, Q methodology is a useful tool with which to seek subjective positions of food insecurity – how it is understood as a problem. Its particular strength in this lies in its incorporating quantitative and qualitative elements.

Q methodology is also useful for researching controversial or sensitive topics; it allows personal expression within a structured response. It also prompts contemplation of a range of aspects of the topic of research, in a way that requires these aspects to be considered alongside each other, rather than as isolated ideas. Q methodological research follows a series of steps, using several methods to build research tools and collect data. Drawing on the concise summary of the Q methodology process by Stenner, Watts, and Worrell (2007, 218-230), these will now be explained in the order indicated in Figure 9.



**Figure 9: The process of Q methodology research**

## **6.2 Generating the Concourse**

The concourse is the set of “all the possible statements” which participants could express about the particular topic of research (Van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 4). To generate the concourse, the researcher needs be familiar with the topic (Stenner *et al.* 2007). This familiarity can be gained in any number of ways and from a variety of sources, which might include academic literature, the researchers’ personal experience, conversations, intuition, general knowledge, data drawn from engaging participants in open or semi-structured interviews or focus groups, participant observation, and popular literature such as news reports, novels, or newspapers’ letters to the editor (Stenner *et al.* 2007; Van Exel and de Graaf 2005). The concourse in this research drew on academic literature, data from semi-structured interviews with three participants, and informal conversations.

## **6.3 Selecting the Q set**

Statements are selected from the concourse to form the Q set with the intention of making it “a representative sample” (Van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 4), one which “adequately reflects a full range of contributions to the qualitative debate” (Stenner *et al.* 2007, 220). Stenner *et al.* (2007, 221) note that familiarity with the relevant theme may lead the researcher to “notice a number of distinct aspects to the concourse”. Identifying such themes can be helpful in generating the Q set – avoiding overlap between statements and ensuring that a range of views are represented across each theme. The Q set in the present research was parsed through the use of a matrix, an example of which can be seen in Table 4. The matrix, with statements organised by common theme, aided in the selection of a Q set not overly dominated by a particular theme – themes

were unevenly represented in the initial body of statements generated – and with statements addressing major issues within each theme.

Selections from the body of statements (n=165) created the Q set (n=78). Seventy eight statements is an acceptable size of Q set, being large enough to avoid weakening a claim to “adequate/comprehensive coverage” of the topic, and limited for pragmatic reasons (Watts and Stenner 2012, 61). More than one participant found the size of the Q set a little trying, with the attention and time required to sort it quite demanding, so a larger Q set would have added difficulty to the data collection process. The Q set was tested with a person unfamiliar with the topic before use with participants in order to ensure that the statements were coherent and not obscure. Changes were made to the phrasing of several statements following this test.

Concern about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand	
Empirical	The number of people who use food banks is increasing
	The number of food parcels being given out by food banks is cause for concern
Rights violation	The outcomes of food insecurity are unacceptable violations of people’s right to health
Ethical	With all the farms in New Zealand, it is shameful that there are food insecure people in the country
Health	Food insecurity has serious implications for public health in New Zealand
Causes of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand	
Individual fault	People with low incomes or on benefits can manage if they don’t make bad choices
Personal circumstance	Most people do not have control over the circumstances which make them food insecure
Government/ policy	When people go hungry in New Zealand it is mostly because of government policies
	The government does not want to hear about food insecurity in New Zealand
Public perception	Most New Zealanders are not aware of food insecurity as a problem
Other structures	Intergenerational poverty is a driver of long-term food insecurity
	Mental health issues are a barrier to food security in New Zealand

**Table 4: Matrix of two themes use to characterise and parse the initial body of statements**

Stenner *et al.* (2007) emphasise that the participants’ engagement with the Q set is the essential element in the methodology, rather than the perfect construction of the Q set. Therefore, whilst efforts were made to make the Q set a research instrument fit for purpose, the fact that several imperfections became evident during the research process, some remarked upon by participants, does not invalidate the findings.

It is also important to note that despite the consistent direction in the literature that the Q set should include only “self-referent” statements – statements of opinion, not of fact – some empirically-determinable statements were included in the Q set (Van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 4). This was because around the subjects of hunger, food insecurity, food poverty, poverty in general, and state welfare provision, the distinction between empirical statements and opinion, at least in discussion, are fairly frequently distorted by ideology. The inclusion of empirical statements was questioned by participants, who nonetheless agreed that a number of contributors to discourse concerning this issue blur the distinction between facts and opinion.

#### **6.4 Selecting the p-set**

The p-set is the set of participants in the research. It is useful here to draw attention to major differences between R methodology, used for the majority of research into peoples’ attitudes, and Q methodology. The central difference between the two methodologies is the substance of the analysis. Research following R methodology seeks to “correlate and factor traits” of participants (Stenner *et al.* 2007, 216). Q methodology inverts this, approaching Q statements as the subjects of research, and people’s subjective positioning as the variables in research (Webler, Danielson, and Tuler 2009, 7). Plummer (2012, n.p.) describes R methodology as using “by-item factor analysis” and Q methodology as using “by-person factor analysis”.

The results of a Q study describe “a population of viewpoints and not, like in R, a population of people” (Van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 2). The representative sampling in Q methodology selects the group of statements in the Q set, not the group of participants. Therefore, the p-set is not intended to be representative of a wider population.

How, then, should participants be selected? Watts and Stenner (2012, 70-1, emphasis in original) suggest that participants should be people who “have a defined viewpoint to express” and “whose viewpoint *matters*” concerning the topic of study. Van Exel and de Graaf (2005, 6) state that people selected ought to be “theoretically relevant to the problem under consideration”. Therefore, the p-set is not randomly selected but “a structured sample” (Van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 6).

For this research, five ways of knowing, or routes to knowing about, food insecurity were identified: the experiences of food insecure people, the research of academics, the relief work of NGOs, the work of policy makers in the area, and the range of influences on the knowledge



and opinions of the general public. Of these groups, people in the first and last were not included in the p-set. The exclusion of food insecure people from the sample population was a difficult choice. Regarding the quality of data, this group have a unique and important perspective on hunger as an issue. Food insecurity is an issue for other people, but as the embodied 'site' of the problem, this is the group that *suffers* food insecurity. Only this group knows food insecurity as a way of being. Additionally, of the five groups, this has the least powerful voice – in line with the theorisation in Chapter 5. Continuing the neglect of this voice and focusing on the knowledge of elites does not reflect the concern for social justice that motivated this research.

However, this group was not included in the p-set for two reasons. Firstly, the innovation this research hoped to make was not in understanding the suffering of hunger but rather in understanding how the empirically documented deleterious effects of food insecurity have not driven co-ordinated efforts to substantially and permanently eradicate food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. While experiential knowledge of food insecurity would certainly usefully reveal specific elements of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, this is not the primary focus of this thesis.

The second reason was the nature of this group, which has four elements. The first was a desire not to impose upon a group of people who are by definition stressed and lack resources. In addition, as a group of people evidently disadvantaged in society, at least some are likely to have been targeted by researchers previously. The second element had to do with participant recruitment, likely at the site of a food bank, which raises two issues. One is practical – it is not clear how difficult it would be to gain participants without bothering people collecting a food parcel. The second and related issue is ethical – recruitment at the site of a charitable exchange has at least the potential to bring an element of coercion to the process.

The third element was a concern about the effect of involvement in this research on participants from this group. While every effort would have been made to make this an empowering experience, it is possible that for some people, participation would have been a disempowering or negative experience. Finally, the vulnerability of this group evident in the reasons above mean that a lengthy involvement with the University's Human Ethics Committee would have been necessary. Given the limited duration of this research, this constituted a further reason to exclude this group from the p-set.

The perceptions of the general public regarding food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand were not sought in this research as these could not be assumed to be ‘defined viewpoints’. While the Q sort exercise prompts participants to consider a range of aspects of the topic, some of which they might otherwise not consider, this has the possibility to overwhelm participants who lack a familiarity with the topic. Furthermore, the scale of this research supports collecting the subject positions of a well-defined and numerically small group. The viewpoints of members of the general public are certainly relevant to an investigation of the construction of the problem of food insecurity, not least as they inform and shape the rhetoric and policy direction of the government of the day. However, an investigation into this dynamic would necessitate a larger scale of research than that attached to this thesis, and would most likely benefit from a more quantitative methodology, with a representative sample of participants.

As data collection proceeded, I relaxed the criteria for selection somewhat, seeking to include a more heterogeneous range of stated political preferences; it proved very difficult to access right-of-centre subjectivities professionally familiar with food insecurity. Subsequently, the criterion requiring participants to have a professional background in food insecurity was not strictly followed. This criterion seemed to be the most dispensable, and was ignored without affecting the other criteria: only defined and clearly articulated viewpoints with theoretical significance to the topic at hand were collected.

#### *6.4.1 Overview of Participants*

While not of significant importance to Q methodology, the basic demographic information of participants may be of interest. The data that was gathered is outlined below. Participants understood that supplying demographic information was at their discretion, and on some occasions the time generously made available to the researcher expired before it was collected.

Ten participants completed a Q-sort and a short interview (n=10). Of these, three were female and seven male. The average age of participants who completed the demographic survey (n=7) was 40, with the youngest being 27 and the eldest 51. Participants identified as a variety of ethnicities, including New Zealand European (n=3), Māori (n=1), Samoan (n=1), Caucasian (n=1), and Australian born (n=1). All participants had completed a Bachelor’s degree or equivalent (n=6), and many had also completed a Post-graduate degree or equivalent (n=4). In the past year, participants had received income from wages, salary or commissions (n=6) and

investments (n=1). Participants' household income ranges were \$60,001 – \$70,000 (n=3), \$70,001 – \$100,000 (n=2), and \$150,001 – 200,000 (n=1).

Participants were familiar with food insecurity from an academic or research background (n=3), as charity responder (n=5) and as a policy maker (n=1). Most participants' political inclinations can be broadly described as leftist; responses included liberal left, Classical liberal, Labour/Independent, Greens and disappointed. Participants' religious beliefs included Agnostic, Atheist, Christian, Practicing Christian, Follower of Jesus, and weak. Some general observations about commonalities between participants are that they are older, employed, highly educated, financially secure, and politically liberal.

## **6.5 Collecting Data**

There are several methods of data collection used in Q methodology, centred on the Q sort activity undertaken by each participant. In this research, this was followed by a short semi-structured interview and an invitation to complete a demographic survey. The procedure followed in collecting data drew particularly from *Doing Q Methodological Research* (Watts and Stenner 2012). The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee approved the data collection with application reference number 14/04 B.

### **6.5.1 The Q Sort**

The Q sort activity seeks to capture participants' subjective positioning on the research topic. The procedure followed in this research will be described step by step. To begin, participants were offered the information sheet, which they had previously received by email, and were asked to sign a consent form if they were happy to proceed. The research topic and the Q sort procedure were explained, and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Participants were then given the Q set, with each statement on a separate, randomly numbered, regularly sized card. Each card had a Velcro patch so that it would stick to a space on the grid provided. They were reminded that the focus of the research is food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, so that this is the context in which the statements in the Q set should be considered.

The Q sort activity is a framework within which participants “are asked to respond to each item and to make a specific self-referential [subjective] judgment about it... and to do this *in relation to* all of the other items” (Stenner *et al.* 2007, 223, emphasis in original). Therefore, to familiarise the participants with the range of the Q set, they were asked to sort the cards into

three piles, according to their response to each statement: generally agree, generally disagree, or feel neutral about it (Stenner *et al.* 2007). This was also a useful way to begin the statement-sorting process as the statement cards were somewhat unwieldy due to their Velcro attachments. When the statements had been organised into three groups, participants were asked to begin placing the statements from their ‘agree’ group of statements onto the forced-distribution grid seen in Figure 10.

**Figure 10: The Q sort grid**

### 6.5.2 The Post-sort Interview

Following this, a short semi-structured interview was conducted, with the aim of assisting in the interpretation of factors when analysing the Q sort data. The researcher had some experience administering interviews in sociology of food research – an area of some delicacy, given the intrinsic and emotive role of food in many peoples' lives. Interviews lasted between 10 and 50 minutes. Most participants were asked if there were particular statements that they would like to expand on, qualify or explain their placement of, to explain their thinking in placing the three statements in the -5 and +5 columns, and if they had any general thoughts about how they had sorted the Q set. Some participants talked to these questions of their own accord, making posing a further question irrelevant. This data was used in the interpretation of the factors.

### 6.5.3 Demographic Survey

After the interview, participants were asked to fill out a short demographic survey as they felt comfortable. The survey can be found in Appendix A. Participants were then offered a New World supermarket voucher to compensate for travel expenses. This concluded the data-gathering process, incorporating three methods – Q sort, interview and survey.

## 6.6 Q Data Analysis

Q methodology's mix of qualitative and quantitative methods is apparent in the analysis. Van Exel and de Graaf (2005, 8) describe the analysis of data gathered in Q sorts as a "technical, objective" procedure. While this casts analysis as a quantitative procedure, factor extraction can be approached inductively and with input from researchers' judgment, while always remaining a statistical exercise (Watts and Stenner 2012, 95). The software used to carry out statistical analysis of the Q sort data was the freeware *PQMethod* (Schmolck 2014). The steps involved in analysing the data will be explained in this section.

Initially, the statements and the Q sort data – the information about where on the grid each participant placed each statement – was entered into *PQMethod*. The entry of this data was double checked and *PQMethod* checks that numbers within the range of statements (n=78) have not been omitted or entered more than once.

### 6.6.1 Factor Extraction

A factor is a "portion of shared meaning" between complete Q sorts (Watts and Stenner 2012, 98) – a way in which the communicated subject positions of participants are similar. Factor

extraction is a statistical process and there is more than one statistical method available to carry it out. Watts and Stenner suggest that centroid factor analysis be used as it offers a number of benefits, the most significant being that it allows for decisions based on researchers' judgment in exploration of the data to direct the analysis. To determine how many factors to extract, *PQMethod* was used to perform a centroid factor analysis of the data from the ten Q sorts six times, extracting a different number of factors each time (from two to seven). The results produced were investigated for viability as results for this research by examining the initial schema of statistical information and through the process of factor rotation.

I settled upon a three-factor solution for several reasons, including statistical and theoretical considerations. Some solutions were eliminated because several of their factors were discarded if they had less than two Q sorts loading onto them significantly at the 0.01 level (Watts and Stenner 2012). For this research, the significant factor loading was calculated to be 0.29 (or 29 percent)<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, if the position articulated by a factor did not have at least 29 percent in common with two or more of the ten Q sorts, it was disregarded. Solutions with a larger number of factors were eliminated in this way. A solution with fewer factors was preferable given the relatively small size of the p-set. The size of the p-set was also a reason for choosing a three-factor solution when not all of the factors conformed with other tests recommended in the literature (see Watts and Stenner 2012, 106-110).

### 6.6.2 Factor Rotation

The rotation of factors allows the clarification of the typified subject position that each represents, using a spatial representation of the relationship between factors and Q sorts, with the relationships between Q sorts themselves remaining unchanged. Figure 11 shows the Q sorts in relation to Factors 1 (y-axis) and 2 (x-axis). The position of a particular Q sort relative to the axes representing a factor indicates the degree of similarity to the ideal-typical subject position of the factor. The axes range from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates 100 percent similarity.

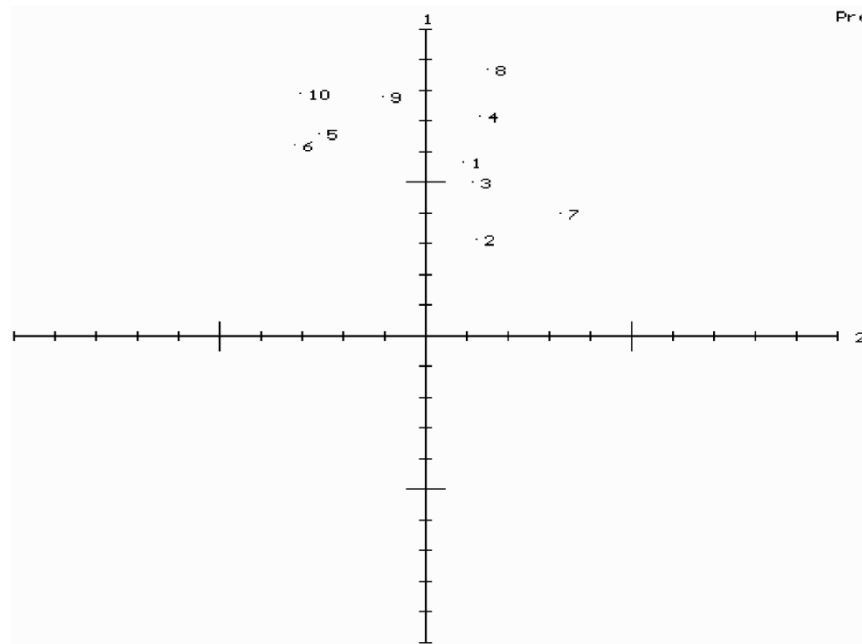
Factor rotation brings a spatial and a visual dimension to the correlations represented by factor loadings (Watts and Stenner 2012). The initial or unrotated factor loadings – how much meaning the subject position shares with the shared meaning represented by a factor – provide coordinates to map the position of each Q sort in relation to the factors, which constitute the

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<sup>24</sup> For the relevant calculation see Watts and Stenner (2012, 107).

axes. This initial mapping provides an indication of the Q sorts' relations to one another. Subject positions that disagree more or have less in common will be located further apart, while subject positions that agree more and have more in common will bunch together.

Every point in this “conceptual space” has meaning, representing a possible subjective position communicated through a Q sort (Watts and Stenner 2012, 115). The following may be observed in Figure 11: (1) there is a group of Q sorts – labelled 6, 5, and 10 – which are clustered, indicating a similarity between these subject positions in their degree of agreement or similarity with both Factor 1 and Factor 2; (2) all other Q sorts, save 7, are similar in respect to their marginal similarity to Factor 2 but have a wide range of levels of similarity to Factor 1; and (3) Q sort 7 is not particularly unusual in its relationship to Factor 1, but is an outlier in its relation to Factor 2.



**Figure 11: The Q sorts in relation to Factors 1 and 2, unrotated. Produced by *PQ Method*.**

Factor rotation involves the manipulation of factors, represented by axes, in relation to the constellation of participant viewpoints, represented by points in conceptual space. This manipulation might appear at first to be “methodological *cheating* or sleight of hand”, so it is important that the process and the concepts that underlie it are made clear (Watts and Stenner 2012, 129, emphasis in original).

It is important to note that factor rotation “does not and cannot change the viewpoint or perspective of any Q sort”, nor the similarities between Q sorts (Watts and Stenner 2012, 129).

Watts and Stenner (2012) emphasise that it is important to understand that the factors-axes are viewed from the end of another factor's axis – in Figure 11, the positive pole of Factor 3. The space in Figure 11 therefore represents three factors: Factor 1 constitutes the  $y$ -axis, Factor 2 the  $x$ -axis, and Factor 3 the  $z$ -axis – standing directly up from the page and running its negative pole through the pages behind (Watts and Stenner 2012).

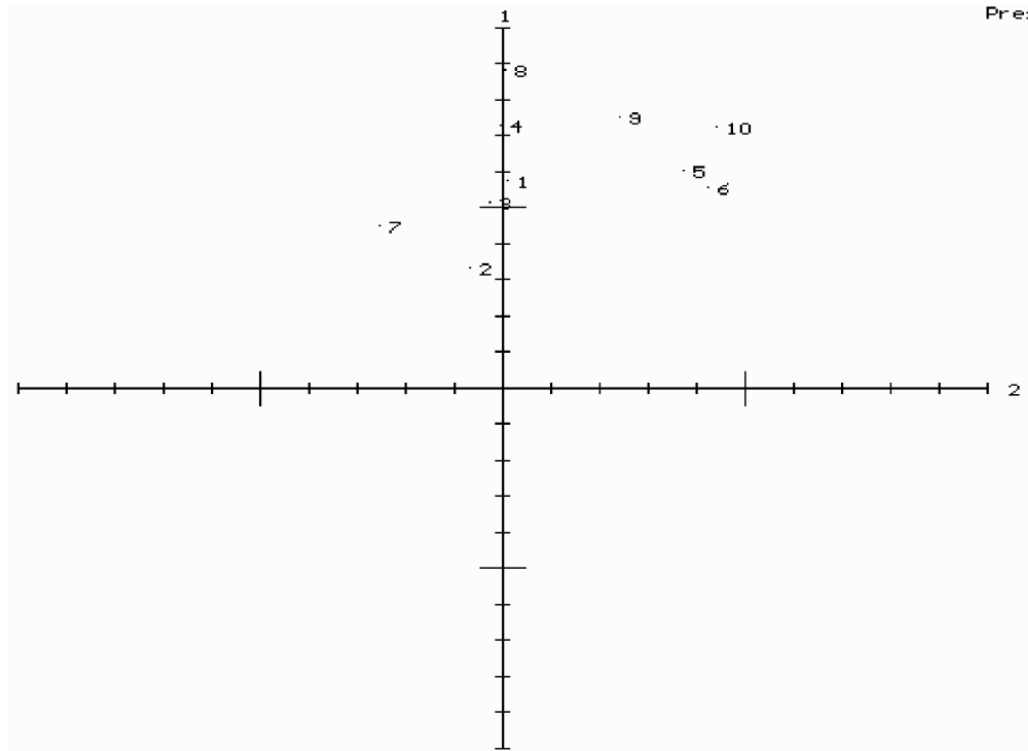
This spatial explanation is intended to make the movement involved in factor rotation easier to grasp. The meaning of the Q sorts themselves remains unchanged, as does their relationship to one another; the data remains unaltered. What moves in factor rotation is the particular perspective of the factors on the data. What is altered is the ability of the researcher to comprehend what is shared between the subjective positioning of particular participants.

The aim of factor rotation is to align factors so that their viewpoints “closely approximates” the “viewpoint of a particular group of Q sorts, or perhaps just one or two Q sorts of particular importance” (Watts and Stenner 2012, 127). It is desirable to rotate factors because “the viewpoints provided by the extracted factors are the only means by which we, as researchers, can now access and understand our subject matter” (Watts and Stenner 2012, 118). Following rotation, the ideal-typical subject position of the factors will more clearly reflect the subject position represented in one or more of the Q sorts arranged by participants. The process of rotation produces factors which are not only meaningful, given that they are extracted from the meaning shared between participants' subject positions, but also useful, providing insight into “distinct regularities or *patterns of similarity*” between participants' responses (Watts and Stenner 2012, 98, emphasis in original).

In the present research, rotation was initially carried out with the intention of aligning clusters of Q sorts with factors where possible. This is visible in Figure 12, where the relationship between Factor 2 and both the groups of Q sorts – one in a line up the  $y$ -axis and one in a group in the top-right quadrant of the graph – clarifies what the Q sorts have in common. The second intention in factor rotation was motivated by Brown's suggestion that “it is often worthwhile to rotate factors judgementally [and] in keeping with theoretical, as opposed to mathematical criteria” (1980 in Watts and Stenner 2012, 99). Particular Q sorts were identified as theoretically important either because of the participant who created them, or because of their statistical relationship with other Q sorts, evident in initial analysis. Attempts were then made to align factors more closely with these Q sorts, without discarding the previous focus on group



alignments. In rotating Factor 1 together with Factor 3, rather than conflicting with group-focused rotation, the theoretically-informed rotation guided a choice to align Factor 1 with one of two groups of Q sorts.



**Figure 12: The Q sorts across axes representing Factors 1 and 2 after manipulation. Produced by *PQ Method*.**

Following rotation, the rotated factor matrix was produced. This indicates how similar the subjective positions represented by the Q sorts are to each of the ideal-typical subject positions represented by the factors. It also shows which Q sorts are significantly associated with each factor. As noted in sub-section 6.6.1, the level of significance was calculated to be a fairly low 0.29, or 29 percent similarity to a factor. This is because of the small p-set sample ( $n=10$ ) and as well as the relative homogeneity of participant subject positions.

Table 5 shows, for instance that Q sort 10 has a high loading on Factor 1 (85 percent), indicating that this Q sort is largely representative of the subject position of Factor 1. In contrast, this Q sort has little in common with Factor 2 (nine percent) and has nothing in common with Factor 3, directly disagreeing with five percent of that subject position. Q sort 2 does not load significantly on any factor.

	Loading onto Factors		
<i>Q sort</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>0.4651</b>	<b>0.3338</b>	0.0684
<b>2</b>	0.2341	0.2291	0.0954
<b>3</b>	<b>0.3990</b>	<b>0.3141</b>	0.0880
<b>4</b>	<b>0.5825</b>	<b>0.4275</b>	0.1047
<b>5</b>	<b>0.7053</b>	0.0891	-0.0719
<b>6</b>	<b>0.7127</b>	0.0030	-0.0558
<b>7</b>	<b>0.2811</b>	<b>0.3147</b>	<b>0.3849</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>0.7099</b>	<b>0.5097</b>	0.1241
<b>9</b>	<b>0.7290</b>	<b>0.2998</b>	-0.0469
<b>10</b>	<b>0.8503</b>	0.0988	-0.0598

Table 5: The rotated factor matrix, showing the factor loadings for each Q sort, with defining Q sorts indicated in bold.

*PQMethod* produces a range of information about the rotated factors, including the degree of preference for each statement in the Q set, statements that are points of disagreement or consensus between factors. This data will be examined in Chapter 7.

### 6.6.3 Factor Estimation

Factor estimation serves to provide an estimate of the subject position typified by a factor and allows the construction of a model Q sort for each factor – a weighted average of all of the Q sorts that load significantly on a factor. It is necessary to decide which Q sorts to include in calculations to construct the estimate of a particular factor. Reasons to exclude Q sorts are their not loading significantly enough on a given factor, and their being confounded – loading significantly onto more than one factor (Watts and Stenner 2012, 129). For reasons of scale in this research, no Q sorts that loaded significantly onto a factor were excluded from the estimation of that factor. It was impractical to exclude confounded Q sorts, because the homogeneity of participants' positioning resulted in the significant loading of all of the Q sorts onto Factor 1. Exclusion would have detracted from the results, erasing important detail.

A factor estimate is made up of a score for each statement in the Q set, which illustrates the statements a factor agrees and disagrees with. Factor estimates do not allow for cross-factor comparison, because not all factors were calculated with an equal number of Q sorts (Watts and Stenner 2012). However, these figures can be averaged into z-scores, which are comparable, and may be used to construct “factor arrays”, a configuration of the Q set on the distribution chart which is “an ideal-typical representation” of the particular subject position of a factor (Stenner *et al.* 2007, 227). The z-scores are used in analysis in Chapter 7.

The data from the post-sort interviews were used to assist in characterising the factors as detailed subject positions. The depth of this data both complicated and clarified the meaning carried by the quantitative factor arrays associated with each subject position. Reviewing this data also suggested the heterogeneity of nuance in reasoning expressed by participants for the positions displayed in the factor arrays. This is not to say that participants who share a high loading on a factor disagree, just that agreement does not equate to conformity of thought.

## **6.7 Room for Improvement**

While I am happy with how the research progressed, I would do several things differently in the future. First, the wording of some statements may have been leading, as one participant suggested, and influenced participants to respond to them in a particular way. It is possible that this did not occur; perhaps it depends on how well articulated participants’ views on the ideas expressed by each statement in the Q set were before engaging with the Q sort activity. Leading wording may have been due to the source material. Like the results, this was dominated by subject responses oriented to the importance of structures, and state structures in particular, to food insecurity in rich liberal democracies. In line with this, participants tended to have a far larger ‘agree’ pile when pre-sorting the Q set. Participant five noted that there were “less statements to disagree with”.

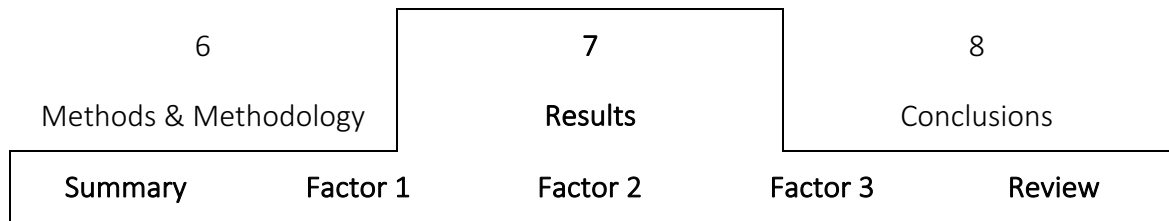
Another aspect of statement wording of concern is overly general statements, or statements, that referred to ideas so broad as to be of little use in distinguishing factors. Unfortunately, such statements only became evident after analysis. Furthermore, it may not be possible to distinguish productive and unproductive broad statements before conducting the Q sort activities and interviews. That is, some broad statements may provoke an interesting range of responses in the post-sort interviews despite being fairly uniformly placed by participants,

while others may not appear to provide particularly useful data. Having said that, consensus regarding signifiers, if not what is signified, may be a useful finding.

As was mentioned in section 6.3, the size of the Q set ( $n=78$ ) appeared to be trying for some participants. The size of the Q set is a balance between capturing the complexity of a topic and practical or pragmatic considerations. This Q set was not too large, but efforts to reduce it were certainly worthwhile, and this is important to consider in future use of Q methodology. Whoever participants are, they will most likely have limits to available time and attention. It is possible that getting Q sorts completed by post or similar – at participants' leisure – offers a way to bend these limits. However, many participants undertook the Q sort activities with sporadic communication with the researcher, which would not be possible in this mode of data collection.

This chapter has outlined the procedure of a Q methodology investigation, and described the specifics of the methods used in the present research. The next chapter will describe the results of this investigation, describing what people involved in work concerning food insecurity actually think about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Chapter 7 – The Problem As We See It: Results of Q Methodology



This chapter reports on the findings of the Q methodology study. From the data collected, three ‘ideal-typical’ subject positions were identified. These were interesting in that two linked how respondents perceived the problem as being manifested in Aotearoa New Zealand with what they considered to be the appropriate political/policy/societal responses. As a result, the Q method was successful in revealing interesting clusterings and patterns that I argue represent ideal types of political subject positions oriented differently to the social condition of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

These ideal types revealed clustering around one of three potential responses and responsibilities for food insecurity. These were: (1) that ultimate responsibility for addressing the problem lay with the state because key causes of the problems operate at the macro-level; (2) the problem is driven by micro-level factors, which locally-based charities may be best equipped to respond to; and (3) a smaller cluster, representing the view that a current mix of state and charity response to the problem is not inadequate because the problem is not considered to be significant.

The three clusters were also differentiated in their level of acceptance of current approaches and the value of underlying political discourses. Factor One is generally critical of current political responses and supports evidence-based policy intervention in line with citizen rights discourses. Factor Two focuses on the situations in which people are food insecure and does not strongly support state or charitable action regarding these. Factor Three acknowledges that the state has a responsibility for citizen welfare and views this as already being acceptably executed, so that narratives of the primacy of individual choice are evident.

The first subject position was by far the most common and was strongly expressed by most participants. This is interesting because at first sight, it seems to contradict the theoretical

explanation examined in earlier chapters of this thesis. The depoliticisation of food insecurity as an element of neoliberal governance would be strongly borne out as an explanation for the lack of public concern if there were a majority of respondents aligned with Factor Three, or perhaps Factor Two, as neither advocates a regime of state action to reduce food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. So, ideas consistent with a depoliticised subjectivity are present in only two of the three clusters of participants. A depoliticised subjectivity is considered here to be one inflected with neoliberal political rationality, which constructs food insecurity as a depoliticised issue in line with neoliberal governmentality.

I will now characterise the results and then examine why they do not conform to the expectation of the theorisation in Chapter 5. The results are potentially revealing for how we understand food insecurity as a concern, depoliticisation as an element of neoliberal governmentality, and the contestation of neoliberal political rationality as hegemonic in Aotearoa New Zealand. Chapter 8 will explore these ideas.

### **7.1 Summary of Findings**

Analysis of the Q sort data produced three factors, representing three subject positions on what makes food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand a problem. These three ideal-typical positions on food insecurity do not exhaust the potential range of views about this topic held by people working in academic research, charity response, or policy making in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are nonetheless useful, highlighting areas of consensus and contention, and bringing together the subjective understandings and framings of people operating in areas that relate to food insecurity in different ways. The differences between the factors are interesting, and their similarities informative. The three factors will be examined in turn.

The examination of each factor separately is something of a forced construction, as the relationship between factors regarding particular statements or ideas is interesting and significant in itself. Having said that, points of consensus between the three factors will be highlighted in the initial overview. Distinguishing and detailing the differences between subject positions is interesting, but highlighting areas of consensus may be more useful in progressing action against food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, which this thesis hopes to contribute to.

### 7.1.1 Factor Overview

The factors are ideal-typical representations of particular subject positions, and so the ten Q sorts align with each to different extents. The rotated factor matrix is repeated here for reference.

Q sort	Loading onto Factors		
	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>0.4651</b>	<b>0.3338</b>	0.0684
<b>2</b>	0.2341	0.2291	0.0954
<b>3</b>	<b>0.3990</b>	<b>0.3141</b>	0.0880
<b>4</b>	<b>0.5825</b>	<b>0.4275</b>	0.1047
<b>5</b>	<b>0.7053</b>	0.0891	-0.0719
<b>6</b>	<b>0.7127</b>	0.0030	-0.0558
<b>7</b>	0.2811	<b>0.3147</b>	<b>0.3849</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>0.7099</b>	<b>0.5097</b>	0.1241
<b>9</b>	<b>0.7290</b>	<b>0.2998</b>	-0.0469
<b>10</b>	<b>0.8503</b>	0.0988	-0.0598

**Table 6: The rotated factor matrix, showing the factor loadings for each Q sort, with defining Q sorts indicated in bold.**

Factor 1 is the subject position most broadly supported by the ten Q sorts. Table 6 shows that all but one of the Q sorts load significantly onto Factor 1. Table 7 shows that a large amount of the study variance is explained or captured by Factor 1, far more than the other two positions. For these reasons, Factor 1 can be characterised as the generally accepted view among participants. In contrast, Factors 2 and 3 highlight areas where some participants depart from or disagree with this general consensus. Participant 2 did not load significantly onto any factor.

Because the ideal-typical positions are constructed from the views of participants proportionate to their loading on a factor, those where there are few strong loadings are open to influence by the idiosyncrasies of Q sorts with relatively high loadings. This does not make these factors any less valid, but it is worth bearing in mind where there are unexpected or apparently contradictory responses between statements in a factor.

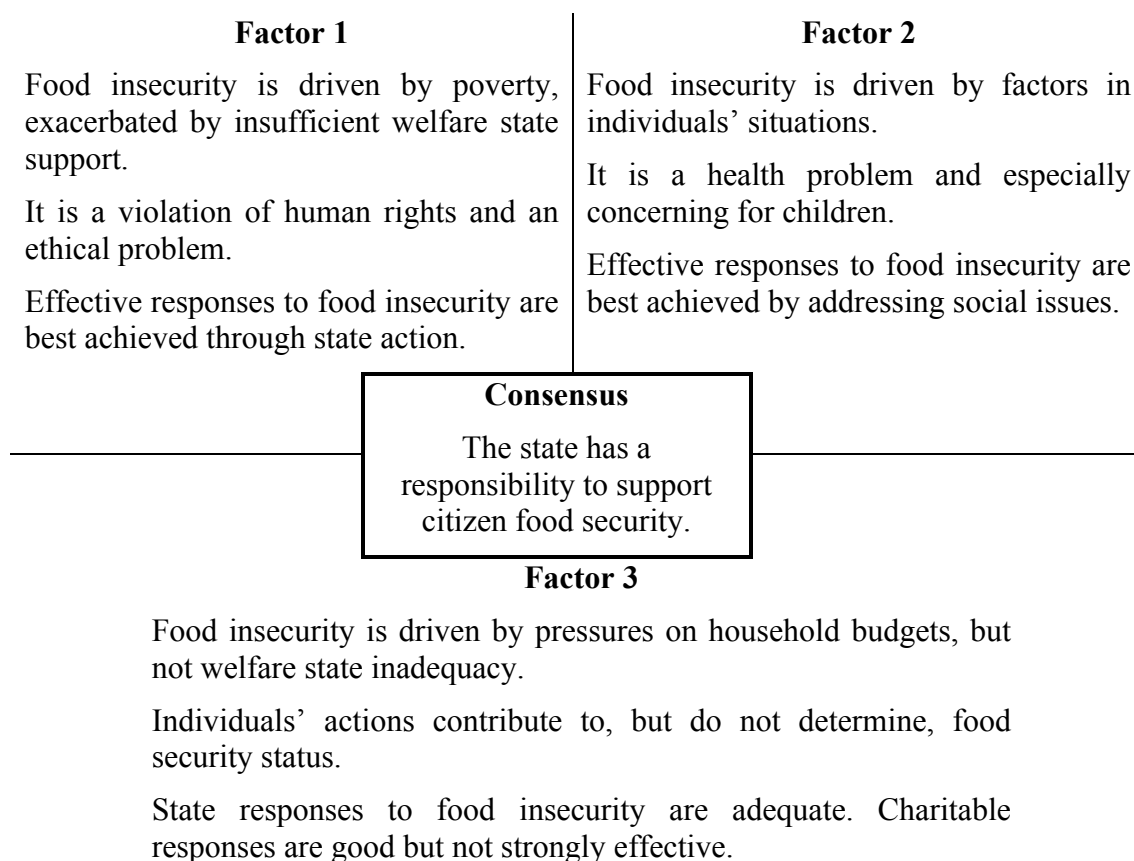
As can be seen in Table 7, Factors 1 and 2 share a substantial amount of meaning, and Factors 1 and 3 also have a lot of common ground. Factors 2 and 3 are not so highly correlated, indicating that the positions they represent are less similar. As the examination of each factor will explain, this is because Factors 2 and 3 agree in many areas with Factor 1 and differ on a few key points. These key points differ between Factors 2 and 3, hence the lower correlation between them. The fact that Factor 1 correlates so highly with the other two factors indicates that the subject position represented by Factor 1 is a generally accepted view.

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
<b>Factor 1</b>	1.0000	-	-
<b>Factor 2</b>	0.8713	1.0000	-
<b>Factor 3</b>	0.3163	0.5647	1.0000
<b>% variance explained</b>	36%	9%	2%

**Table 7: Correlations between factors and the percentage of variance explained by each factor**

A notable consensus across all three factors was support for a responsibility on the part of the state to support food security for its citizens. Figure 13 briefly summarises the characteristics of each factor in terms of how each understands the problem food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.





**Figure 13: Summary of each factor's characterisation of the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Table 8 provides a brief summary characterising each of the factors. The detail of factor interpretation from which this summary is drawn follows.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<b>The problem is...</b>	<p>Very concerning</p> <p>A violation of human rights</p>	<p>A concern</p> <p>A health problem</p> <p>Egregious for children</p>	<p>One that NZ can deal with</p>
<b>Causes of the problem are...</b>	<p>Poverty</p> <p>Welfare state inadequacy</p>	<p>Pressures on household budgets</p> <p>Welfare state inadequacy</p>	<p>Pressures on household budgets</p> <p>Not welfare state inadequacy</p>

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
<b>Responsibility for the problem...</b>	Lies with the state Generally does not lie with individuals	Lies with the state Generally does not lie with individuals	Lies with the state Lies with individuals to an extent Lies with parents
<b>The problem is best responded to...</b>	By the state, which has a responsibility for citizen food security Through the welfare state	By addressing financial constraints on food access Through the welfare state	Through education and easing financial pressures on food access Not by the welfare state; by individual generosity; by charity
<b>Children versus adults...</b>	Everyone deserves to eat	Children deserve more help to be food secure	Children deserve more help to be food secure Children should be cared for by their parents
<b>Factor tone</b>	Analytical	Evoking emotions	Optimistic
<b>Factor focus</b>	Effect of macro-level structures	Interaction of individual problems and structures	Impact of micro-level (in)actions
<b>How does food insecurity come to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?</b>	Structural barriers, requiring structural adjustments	Structural impacts on elements of the population with particular characteristics	Individual circumstance, requiring education and easing financial pressure on food budget

**Table 8: Summary of findings from Q methodology research**

The factors will be referred to from this point as ‘structural adjustment’ position (Factor 1), ‘emotive concern’ position (Factor 2), and ‘ensuring opportunities’ position (Factor 3). The

focus on responses in these labels reflects the desire of this research to focus on action to reduce food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A simple way to understand what is most important in the three positions is to look at what each holds to be the most important statements. Therefore, the highest and lowest ranked statements for each factor are listed in this overview of the three factors. Evident in Table 9 is the similar rankings of statements, highlighting the degree of correlation between the structural adjustment position and each of the other two positions.

	<b>Factor 1 – structural change</b>	<b>Factor 2 – emotive concern</b>	<b>Factor 3 – ensuring opportunities</b>
<b>+5</b>	<p>11_No child in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>3_Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>8_People have a ‘right to food’, comparable to their ‘right to free speech’</p>	<p>11_No child in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>46_The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people</p> <p>10_Food insecurity increases health costs for the state</p>	<p>3_Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>11_No child in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>46_The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people</p>
<b>+4</b>	<p>30_Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity</p> <p>52_The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing &amp; shelter</p> <p>41_For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints</p> <p>9_The rate of food insecurity is concerning</p> <p>46_The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people</p>	<p>52_The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing &amp; shelter</p> <p>13_Food insecurity increases health costs for families</p> <p>67_Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults</p> <p>3_Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry</p> <p>51_The government should ensure that no child goes hungry</p>	<p>6_The government should ensure that people do not go hungry</p> <p>24_NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries</p> <p>31_A household’s economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make</p> <p>51_The government should ensure that no child goes hungry</p> <p>73_Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending</p>
<b>-4</b>	<p>19_Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes</p> <p>2_Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents</p> <p>66_The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food</p> <p>18_Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living</p> <p>72_Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need</p>	<p>18_Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living</p> <p>72_Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need</p> <p>2_Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents</p> <p>48_Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live</p> <p>17_People can avoid food insecurity if they don’t make bad choices</p>	<p>55_Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched</p> <p>25_The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices</p> <p>70_Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity</p> <p>56_Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a ‘last resort’ below the welfare state</p> <p>42_New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest</p>

	<b>Factor 1 – structural change</b>	<b>Factor 2 – emotive concern</b>	<b>Factor 3 – ensuring opportunities</b>
<b>-5</b>	48_Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live 25_The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices 26_The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour	66_The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food 25_The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices 26_The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour	20_Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels 17_People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices 40_Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern

**Table 9: Highest and lowest ranked statements for each of the factors**

### 7.1.2 Consensus Across Factors

All factors were positively correlated – they all share some meaning or understanding of food insecurity as a problem. Several statements were the subject of a consensus between all three positions, and these will be identified here. The *z*-score and the rank of each statement are provided for comparison. The *z*-score is the standardised weighting of each statement expressing “the distance between a particular absolute score and the mean average score of the measure sample”, in terms of the number of standard deviations in that distance (Watts and Stenner 2012, 21). The rank is out of the 78 statements in the concourse that each participant sorted.

Statement 3					
Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
1.78	2	1.39	7	1.91	3
<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank

While several statements were the subject of a consensus of disagreement or neutral sentiment, this statement was strongly supported by all three positions. Given the level of support for this statement, it is a good starting point for further examination of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Statement 66					
The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-1.56	73	-1.8	76	-1.15	70
<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank

The three positions on how to avoid citizen hunger converge around an acceptance that the state has a role or responsibility to ensure citizen food security, as responses to statement #66 show. What constitutes the appropriate role or actions by the state to this end are less clear-cut.

Statement 18					
Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-1.65	74	-1.34	71	-0.76	63
<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank	<i>z</i> -score	rank

The responses to statement #18 suggest that all three positions view the current level of welfare benefit payments as insufficient or punitive, though the ensuring opportunities position feels less strongly about this than the other two.

Statement 19					
Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-1.41	71	-0.79	62	-0.76	63
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

A level of consensus is also evident in the rejection of this statement, which allocates responsibility for child hunger, an effect of household food insecurity on children. In rejecting the idea that this is due to irresponsible parents, responses to statement #19 suggests that the ascription of social problems to failures in self-responsibility by individuals is not supported by the positions, in particular the structural adjustment position.

Statement 5					
Society has failed people who use food banks					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-0.7	60	-0.92	66	-1.15	70
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

The common rejection of this statement indicates that none of the subject positions supports the idea of a complete absence of food banks in Aotearoa New Zealand. The reasons for this position may not be common between the three groupings.

Statement 38					
Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-0.47	56	-0.46	53	-0.38	54
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

There was some consensus around statements dealing with ways of responding to food insecurity. All three positions reject the idea that food banks constitute an effective solution to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Statement 68					
A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-0.25	49	-0.38	49	0.38	34
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

This statement is not well supported, despite social problems being linked to food insecurity by the emotive concern position, and many participants remarking on the role of social problems in contributing to food insecurity. It may be that disagreement was with the idea of regulatory change as effective in one or more of the positions.

Statement						28
Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-1.36	70	-1.33	70	-0.76	63	
<i>z-score</i>	rank	<i>z-score</i>	rank	<i>z-score</i>	rank	

This statement was introduced based on a concern that a change in the requirements on a household's budget during the school holidays would be difficult to manage. The rejection of this statement may indicate an 'any support is good' attitude, or a lack of concern about the flexibility of the household budget.

Statement						25
The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-2.18	77	-2.29	77	-1.53	75	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

The idea that restricting the choices that beneficiaries are able to make - financial or otherwise - could be helpful is roundly rejected in all three positions.

Statement						26
The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-2.4	78	-2.33	78	-1.15	70	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

Similarly, the idea that penalties for behaviour judged as poor might be helpful is rejected by all three positions. Participant one identified "judgmental" statements as ones sorted to the 'disagree' side of the grid.



Statement 35					
Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
0.18	36	0.28	32	0.76	24
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

Several statements concerning particular responses to food insecurity have mild but consistent support from across the three groupings. One such is the idea that educating children about food can support a reduction in food insecurity.

Statement 76					
A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
0.66	22	0.39	27	0.38	34
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

There is also a level of agreement among the positions regarding statement #76, addressing the relationship between the welfare state and food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. No group rejects the idea that benefit levels ought to 'provide people's basic needs'. How the treatment of this statement compares to that of other statements concerning the welfare state will be examined soon.

Statement 58					
People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
0.43	25	0.51	24	0.76	24
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

Statement #58 is another that has mild but consistent support, with all three groups supporting this broadly defined response to food insecurity.

### 7.1 Structural Adjustment – Factor 1

The factor array – the arrangement of the Q set according to the ideal-typical position represented by the factors – for the structural adjustment position is available in Appendix D. The structural adjustment position explains 39 percent of the study variance, and all but one of the participants loaded significantly onto it. This position will be examined here by noting the ranked position of statements, focusing on those more strongly supported or rejected by the subjects. These will be addressed in thematic groups. For the most part, statements subject to

consensus across the three position and already examined in section 7.1.2 will not be included here.

It should be remembered that statements are ranked in relation to one another. A statement ranked at 55 is less strongly agreed with or supported than one ranked at 45. The statement ranked at 47 out of 78 will appear in the -1 column of a factor array. The ‘-’ does not necessarily mean that the subject position represented by that factor array disagrees with or rejects the idea in that statement; it may, or it may only agree less strongly with it than the statements ranked above it.

### *7.1.1 Concern about Food Insecurity*

#	Statements	Rank	Value
11	No child in New Zealand should go hungry	1	+5
3	Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry	2	+5
9	The rate of food insecurity is concerning	7	+4
67	Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults	40	0

**Table 10: The structural adjustment subject position’s ranking of statements indicating concern about the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The structural adjustment position is concerned about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Three of the four statements in Table 10 are strongly supported by this position. The position can be said to value food security as a problem, and to be concerned that there are people who suffer food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The very slightly higher concern for children suffering food insecurity and the lack of much support for the idea that children deserve more assistance to be food secure than adults (#67) suggests that the subject position does not make a principled difference so much as a practical difference between adults and children.

### Health, Human Rights and the Problem

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Health</i></b>			
10	Food insecurity increases health costs for the state	9	+3
13	Food insecurity increases health costs for families	19	+2
<b><i>Human rights</i></b>			
8	People have a ‘right to food’, comparable to their ‘right to free speech’	3	+5
12	The outcomes of food insecurity are a violations of the human right to health	16	+2

**Table 11: The structural adjustment subject position’s ranking of statements concerning health, human rights and the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The structural adjustments position identifies the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand as a health problem. This can be understood both as a concern for health, in the illness of individuals, and as an economic concern, in the expense of health care services for people and for the state. This position also identifies the problem as a violation of human rights.

### Poverty Driving the Problem

#	Statements	Rank	Value
30	Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity	4	+4
41	For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints	6	+4
31	A household’s economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make	13	+3
34	With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices	45	-1

**Table 12: The structural adjustment subject position’s ranking of statements concerning poverty and household finances in relation to household food insecurity**

The structural adjustment subject position strongly supports the idea that poverty is the major driver of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The statements in Table 12 not only address food insecurity in general, but also the importance of access to “nutritionally adequate and safe foods” (Anderson 1990, 1575). This is important in food insecurity as distinct from the manifestation of hunger – for instance the seemingly paradoxical condition of food insecurity being linked to overweight and obesity (Tanumihardjo, Anderson, Kaufer-Horwitz, Bode,

Emenaker, Haqq, Satia, Silver, and Stadler 2007; Martin and Ferris 2007). The support of the structural adjustment position for statements #41 and #31 indicates that it recognises the significance of this dimension of food insecurity. Mild disagreement with statement #34 offsets the idea that the only barrier to food security is income.

More detail about the drivers of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand as viewed by the structural adjustment subject position can be gained from examining statements that were disagreed with. In particular the position's weighting of structure over agency in causes of food insecurity lays the foundation for understanding this position's view of responsibility for and suitable responses to the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### *7.1.2 Causes of Food Insecurity*

#	Statements	Rank	Value
46	The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people	7	+4
37	Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity	67	-3
17	People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices	68	-3

**Table 13: The structural adjustment subject position's ranking of statements concerning specific causes of household food insecurity**

As already noted, statement #46 was strongly supported by all three subject positions. This serves as an acknowledgement, also present in much of the literature concerning food (in)security, of the complexity of household food (in)security. The disagreement with statements #37 and #17 by the structural adjustment position indicates that it does not hold individual faults or mistakes, or the particular exercise of individual agency, as being strong drivers of food insecurity.

The importance of structure over agency supported by the structural adjustment position in characterising the causes of food security is reflected in its articulation of what constitutes appropriate responses to the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, and where responsibility for this problem lies.

### 7.1.3 Responses to Food Insecurity

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<i>Welfare state</i>			
52	The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter	5	+4
65	The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive	11	+3
76	A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs	22	+2
53	Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity	42	0
18	Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living	74	-4
48	Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live	76	-5

**Table 14: The structural adjustment subject position's ranking of statements concerning the relationship between the welfare state and food insecurity**

Table 15 shows the response to statement #71 which, taken together with the lack of support for statement #38 across all three factors, suggests that the structural adjustment position views the welfare state as important as a means of preventing food insecurity. However, the relatively neutral placement of statement #53, shown in Table 14, contests the welfare state as the sole focus of the structural adjustment position. The treatment of this statement also suggests that the position does not see the welfare state as a single 'silver bullet' to address food insecurity.

The combination of the response by the structural adjustment position to statements #65 and #18 indicate that the position supports re-calibrating welfare benefit levels in service of the idea expressed in statement #52. It seems, then, that the structural adjustment position supports the welfare state as a means to counter poverty, which it views as directly driving food insecurity (#30 in Table 12), and as part of a broader set of state responses to food insecurity, expressed in support for statement #45 (see Table 16).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b>Charity</b>			
71	Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs	17	+2
42	New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest	14	+3
38	Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity	56	-2
56	Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state	59	-2
73	Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending	66	-3
63	The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand	65	-3

**Table 15: The structural adjustment position's ranking of statements concerning charitable responses to food insecurity**

The structural adjustment position views charitable responses to food insecurity, primarily food banks, as increasingly important to people suffering food insecurity, but ultimately not as an effective solution to the problem of food insecurity. The formalising of the role of food banks as a significant aspect of the welfare state, as has come about in the USA and Canada, is rejected. Furthermore, the rejection of statement #73 aligns with the factor's support for responses to food insecurity with the coordination, resolution and scope of state organisation.

Other statements which deal with charitable food aid highlight the structural adjustment position's priorities.

Statement						5
Society has failed people who use food banks						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-0.7	60	-0.92	66	-1.15	70	
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score	rank	

None of the three positions showed strong support for statement #5, but the structural adjustment position disagreed less strongly than the other two, in line with the view that food banks are not the best long-term solution to food insecurity.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<i>State</i>			
45	A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues	10	+3
54	Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty	20	+2
<hr/>			
1	Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food	69	-3
28	Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year	70	-3

**Table 16: The structural adjustment subject position's ranking of statements concerning state and other non-charitable responses to food insecurity**

The clear support for statement #45 builds on the structural adjustment position's responses to statements concerning charitable responses to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The support shown for this statement compliments the idea that the problem of food insecurity has complex roots and wide-ranging causes, as the broadly supported statement #46 suggests: 'The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people'.

#### *7.1.4 Responsibility for Food Insecurity*

#	Statements	Rank	Value
23	Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government	12	+3
51	The government should ensure that no child goes hungry	18	+2
6	The government should ensure that people do not go hungry	23	+2
<hr/>			
19	Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes	71	-4
2	Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents	72	-4
66	The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food	73	-4
72	Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need	75	-4

**Table 17: The structural adjustment position's ranking of statements concerning responsibility for household food insecurity**

Statement #23 is a normative comment on the role of government. It is clear from the high ranking of this statement, and the rejection of statements #66 and #72, that food security is seen as within the state's purview. The rejection of statements #19 and #2 reinforces the 'structure over agency' characterisation of the problem of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand by the structural adjustment subject position.

## **7.2 Emotive Concern – Factor 2**

The factor array for the emotive concern subject position (Factor 2) is available in Appendix E. The emotive concern position explains nine percent of the study variance, and six of the participants loaded significantly onto it. Three of these participants were involved in charitable responses to food insecurity. These figures, lower than those of the structural adjustment position, do not make this position any less valid. Rather, they indicate that the subject positions of fewer participants aligned with the emotive concern position.

The emotive concern position prioritises concerns over remedies and appears to be the position with the most internal contradictions. It is most concerned with child food (in)security, and the health effects of food insecurity, though it also supports the ideas of the right to food and the state's responsibility for citizen food security. It suggests that financial difficulties and peoples' situations rather than the agency of food insecure people are responsible for food insecurity. Compared to the structural adjustment position, there are different priorities, but the substance of this attribution between the two does not conflict. Where the emotive concern position does differ is its lack of clear support for state action against food insecurity. Indeed, the position does not clearly endorse any specific action to this end.

With this analysis, it should be remembered that Q sorting is an expression of priorities. In theory, a participant, and so an ideal-typical subject position, could agree with 75 out of the 78 statements. The ranking is therefore not a strict agree/disagree binary across the positive and negative columns of the distribution chart. It is an ordering based on strength of feeling (agreement/disagreement) about the statements – prioritising statements with reference to all of the other statements, not categorising statements with reference to the -5 to +5 columns. This offers some context for what may appear to be a lack of coherence in elements of this subject position.



### 7.2.1 Concern about Food Insecurity

Statement						9
The rate of food insecurity is concerning						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
1.3	7	0.86	18	0	44	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

Concern about the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand (#9) is not as high a priority for the emotive concern position as it is for the structural adjustment position. This may be a reason for this position's lack of clear orientation to responses to food insecurity. This is not to say that respondents situated in this position are *unconcerned* with food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, just that this idea is of a lower priority than ideas about the health costs and financial causes of food insecurity, its significance for children, and the proper function of the welfare state.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
11	No child in New Zealand should go hungry	1	+5
3	Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry	7	+4
51	The government should ensure that no child goes hungry	8	+4
6	The government should ensure that people do not go hungry	12	+3
67	Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults	6	+4

**Table 18: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning citizen and child food security**

The reasons for emotive concern position's concern has more to do with the food security of children than of adults. The position does strongly support (universal) citizen food security (statements #3 and #6), but prioritises children's food security as a concern (statements #11 and #51). The position's prioritisation is explicitly stated in its strong support for statement #67.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
10	Food insecurity increases health costs for the state	3	+5
13	Food insecurity increases health costs for families	5	+4
12	The outcomes of food insecurity are a violation of the human right to health	20	+2
14	The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers	22	+2

**Table 19: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning health and food insecurity**

The emotive concern position is markedly concerned about the health effects of food insecurity. The financial costs for both families and the state (statements #10 and #13) are of particular concern. This position is also concerned with the health effects of food insecurity as they relate to the human right to health, and to public health policy (statements #12 and #14). The wording of statement #14 is slightly ambiguous, but given the context, it appears that this position supports the importance of food insecurity as an issue for government attention to public health.

Statement				8
People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'				
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>
1.69	3	1.05	11	0 44
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score rank</i>

The position supports the idea of citizens having a right to food (#8), but not so strongly as the structural adjustment position. This suggests that food insecurity is not centrally defined as a rights issue by the emotive concern position. A citizen's right to health is similarly supported, but not strongly (#12).

### 7.2.2 Causes of Food Insecurity

Statement				30
Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity				
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>
1.63	4	0.9	16	-0.76 63
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score rank</i>

The emotive concern position sees finances as having a role in causing food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. It supports the idea that poverty lies at the root of food insecurity (#30), but not so strongly as the structural adjustment position.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Financial constraint</i></b>			
31	A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make	9	+3
41	For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints	14	+3
<b><i>Income</i></b>			
78	Being employed is not a guarantee of food security	19	+2
57	Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living	25	+1
53	Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity	52	-1

**Table 20: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning financial constraint and income**

The emotive concern position recognises household financial situation as having an important and constraining effect on food choice and nutrition (statements #31 and #41). The source of such constraints might be low wage levels (#78), but insufficient welfare payments (#53) are less strongly endorsed.

#	Statements	Rank	Value	F1 Rank	F1 Value
<b><i>Causes</i></b>					
15	Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity	17	+2	33	+1
59	Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity	21	+2	35	0
50	Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity	29	+1	43	0
27	Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis	65	-3	63	-2

**Table 21: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning drivers of food insecurity, with comparisons to the structural adjustment subject position (Factor 1)**

These statements regarding factors which contribute to food insecurity (statements #15, #59 and #50) are not notably prioritised by the emotive concern position. However, the way that they are consistently given more support than they receive from the structural adjustment position offers a possible reason for the lower support for the idea that poverty is the dominant cause of

food insecurity (statement #30 above). Both positions reject the idea that ‘unexpected’ costs or another crisis for a household is a common cause of food insecurity (#27).

#	Statements	Rank	Value	F1 Rank	F1 Value
<i>Cause – economic structure</i>					
60	Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity	36	0	51	-1
62	Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system	47	-1	27	+1
16	Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity	44	0	30	+1
<i>Cause – welfare state</i>					
53	Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity	52	-1	42	0

**Table 22: The emotive concern subject position’s ranking of statements concerning drivers of food insecurity, compared to the structural adjustment subject position.**

The emotive concern position does not offer much support for the notion that economic structural forces drive food insecurity. Interestingly, it supports the influence of macro-economic conditions (statement #60) slightly more than the structural adjustment position. The influence of economic climate on the incidence food insecurity aside, the ideas that structural low incomes (statement #62) or unemployment (statement #16) drive food insecurity are not well supported. This position does not strongly endorse insufficient welfare payments as contributing to food insecurity (statement #53).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<i>State responsibility</i>			
66	The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food	76	-5
72	Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need	72	-4

**Table 23: The emotive concern subject position’s ranking of statements concerning state responsibility for citizen food security**

As already indicated, there is a consensus across the three subject positions in support of state responsibility for citizen food security (statement #66). The emotive concern position also values the state's responsibility for citizen food security over the responsibility of charities to care for the food insecure (statement #72).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Individual responsibility</i></b>			
17	People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices	75	-4
37	Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity	69	-3
34	With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices	60	-2
32	Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change	30	+1
<b><i>Parental responsibility</i></b>			
2	Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents	73	-4
19	Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes	62	-2
74	Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity	55	-2

**Table 24: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning individual and parental responsibility for food insecurity**

The emotive concern position does not view individual deviance as a significant driver of food insecurity; food insecure people tend not to be at fault for their deprivation. This is expressed in this position more or less strongly rejecting statements regarding personal responsibility (statements #17 and #37) and parental responsibility (statements #2, #19 and #74). This position exhibits a lack of support for the idea that people tend to improve their choices when financial constraints are eased (statement #34). This could be rooted in the idea that 'bad choices' are not a significant factor in food insecurity, or in the idea that people do not take such an opportunity – which may be because of engrained food/dietary habits (some support for statement #32).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Remedial paternalism</i></b>			
48	Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live	74	-4
25	The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices	77	-5
26	The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour	78	-5

**Table 25: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning paternalistic measures to address food insecurity**

The emotive concern position strongly rejects paternalistic measures intended to reduce deviant behaviour in beneficiaries, a group over-represented in food insecurity statistics. This appears to align with the position's rejection of individual deviance as a significant driver of food insecurity. This rejection could also be based in a dislike of paternalism.

### *7.2.3 Responses to Food Insecurity*

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>State responses - adequacy</i></b>			
21	Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies	61	-2
39	The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity	59	-2
45	A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues	34	+1
77	Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity	58	-2

**Table 26: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning the adequacy of state responses to food insecurity**

The emotive concern position does not support the view that the New Zealand Government is neglecting or failing in its responsibility to ensure citizen food insecurity. The position does not see such a failure in Government policy (#21) or in its political programme (#39).

The emotive concern position does not offer much support for state-based responses to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. In line with this, it offers some small support for the concept of a broad and coordinated government approach to the social condition of food insecurity (#45). A specific state programme to reduce child food insecurity, a school lunch/breakfast programme, is much less of a priority (#77).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Responses by charity</i></b>			
70	Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity	64	-3
4	Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity	31	+1

**Table 27: The emotive concern position's ranking of statements concerning charitable responses to food insecurity**

The emotive concern position does not view food banks as a particularly effective response to food insecurity (#70). Corporate-backed school breakfast/lunch programmes are viewed more favourably, but do not receive substantial support either (#4).

#### *7.2.4 Responsibility for Food Insecurity*

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>State</i></b>			
23	Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government	33	+1
73	Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending	40	0
<b><i>State supporting charity</i></b>			
64	Food banks should be supported by local or national government	51	-1
63	The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand	57	-2

**Table 28: The emotive concern subject position's ranking of statements concerning responses to food insecurity by the state**

The position does not feel strongly that the Government is morally bound to ensure that effective measures against food insecurity are put in place (#23). It does not strongly endorse government addressing food insecurity by working through food banks (#64). It also does not view the increased institutionalisation of charities into the apparatus of the welfare state as particularly adverse (#63).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Charity supporting state</i></b>			
56	Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a ‘last resort’ below the welfare state	67	-3
71	Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs	38	0
42	New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest	45	-1

**Table 29: The emotive concern subject position’s ranking of statements concerning the relationship between charitable and state responses to food insecurity**

The emotive concern position does not view charity efforts to reduce food insecurity as working to nullify government responsibility for citizen food insecurity (#56). It also does not much support the idea that charities are ‘picking up the slack’ in caring for citizens for some reason not supported by the welfare state (statements #71 and #42). This view could be due to there being a negligible problem – spending cut-backs and need for care/support – or a negligible shift in burden of care.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Welfare state</i></b>			
52	The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter	4	+4
65	The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive	10	+3
18	Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living	71	-4
76	A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people’s basic needs	27	+1

**Table 30: The emotive concern subject position’s ranking of statements concerning the welfare state**

The emotive concern position supports what might be called a ‘strong’ welfare state. It views the welfare state as an institution that ought to ensure access to the basics of life (#52), and to do this at a level which allows people to ‘thrive’ – to live rather than subsist (#65). This position does not see the welfare state fulfilling this role in Aotearoa New Zealand, because state transfers to beneficiaries are insufficient for the task (#18). In line with these views, this position gives some, though not strong, support for increased benefit levels as a response to food insecurity.



### **7.3 Ensuring Opportunities – Factor 3**

This subject position explains only two percent of the study variance, and only one of the participants loaded significantly onto it. These are particularly low figures and would be reason to abandon the factor in many scenarios. However, this factor has been retained here because of its significance as a counterpoint to the other factors, and particularly the structural adjustment subject position, as indicated by the correlations between factors. Factors 1 and 3 are the least significantly correlated, at 32 percent. An even more compelling reason for retaining Factor 3 is that it matches most closely the theorised neoliberal subject position. Its near total absence in the responses poses quite a challenge to my expectations of the project.

It should be remembered that these subject positions are ideal-typical representations, but that as only one participant loaded significantly onto this factor, the Q set in the factor is not an average, but rather appears as that participant sorted it. It should also be noted that the participant was sought in an attempt to broaden the range of views collected in this research. This involved relaxing the participant criteria somewhat, so that this participant might be said to be less thoroughly professionally involved with empirical data on food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand than other participants. As a way to involve more varied subject positions, this was certainly successful.

A result of the sole-participant loading on this factor is the regular weighting of statements in identical clusters, or a lack of texture in the data within ranked columns. That is, all statements in the +4 column have a z-score of 1.53 and are ranked at 8, while all statements placed in the 0 column have z-score of 0.38 and are ranked at 34.

Bearing in mind the consensus across the three subject positions that the state has a responsibility for the food security of its citizens, there are some interesting differences between factors. This position does not agitate for change in the same way that the structural adjustment position does. It also seems more optimistic than the other two positions; this may be due to the participant's lower level of familiarity with food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand as it exists in empirical data or the course of charity work.

### 7.3.1 Concern about Food Insecurity

Statement						9
The rate of food insecurity is concerning						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
1.3	7	0.86	18	0	44	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

There is a significant distance in concern about food insecurity (#9) between the subject positions, with the ensuring opportunities position significantly less concerned than the other positions.

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Concern</i></b>			
3	Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry	3	+5
11	No child in New Zealand should go hungry	3	+5
67	Children deserve more help to be food secure than adult	15	+3
<b><i>Health</i></b>			
13	Food insecurity increases health costs for families	15	+3
10	Food insecurity increases health costs for the state	24	+2
<b><i>Human rights</i></b>			
12	The outcomes of food insecurity are a violation of the human right to health	63	-2
8	People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'	44	0

**Table 31: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements related to concern about food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position matches the other positions in consensus rejecting the acceptability of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand (statements #3 and #11). No distinction is made between children and adults, though this position does see children as more deserving of assistance to be food secure (#67). This position is concerned about the health costs of food insecurity, but not strongly (statements #13 and #10). This position does not view food security as a human rights problem (statements #12 and #8).

### 7.3.2 Causes of Food Insecurity

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Financial constraint</i></b>			
31	A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make	8	+4
29	The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance	15	+3
34	With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices	15	+3
<b><i>Cause of financial constraint</i></b>			
30	Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity	63	-2
18	Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living	63	-2
57	Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living	70	-3
61	The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high	70	-3
59	Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity	24	+2

**Table 32: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning the role and cause(s) of financial constraint in food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position views financial constraint as playing a role in food insecurity (statements #31 and #29). It also supports the idea that people make the most of the release of financial restraints to make better choices (#34). The cause of financial constraint is less clear. The position does not see financial constraint as rising from poverty (#30), insufficient benefit transfers (#18), low wage levels (#57), or the price of food (#61). It may be contributed to by the limited availability of affordable housing (#59).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Causes</i></b>			
15	Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity	15	+3
50	Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity	24	+2
53	Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity	44	0

**Table 33: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning particular causes of food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position gives some support to mental health issues (#15) and lack of mobility or transport (#50) as contributing to food insecurity. It does not single out insufficient welfare payments as a contributing factor (#53).

### 7.3.3 Responses to Food Insecurity

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b>Charity</b>			
73	Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending	8	+4
64	Food banks should be supported by local or national government	63	-2
70	Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity	65	-4
5	Society has failed people who use food banks	70	-3

**Table 34: The ensuring opportunities subject position ranking of statements concerning charitable responses to food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position strongly supports the idea that responses to food insecurity are best resourced through the generosity of individuals, rather than the state (#73). In line with this, it does not offer support for government support of food banks (#64). This position does not see food banks as especially effective in responding to food insecurity (#70), but views this response as a valid one for society to provide (#5).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b>State</b>			
21	Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies	70	-3
42	New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest	65	-4
56	Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state	65	-4
39	The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity	70	-3
40	Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern	78	-5

**Table 35: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning state responses to food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position rejects the ideas that government policies do not address food insecurity (#21). In line with this, the position also rejects the idea that charities are taking on a larger burden of care (#42). Similarly, it rejects the idea that the operation of the welfare state is being supported by charities (#56). Politically, this position does not view the government as being adverse to the issue of food insecurity (#39) or unwilling to act due to a lack of voter concern about food insecurity (#40).

#### 7.3.4 Responsibility for Food Insecurity

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<i>State</i>			
6	The government should ensure that people do not go hungry	8	+4
51	The government should ensure that no child goes hungry	8	+4
66	The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food	70	-3

**Table 36: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning responsibility for food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position views the state as having a responsibility to support citizen food security – both adult and child (statements #6 and #51). Logically, it rejects the notion that the state ought not to be expected to do this (#66).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<i>Poverty</i>			
54	Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty	15	+3
55	Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched	75	-4

**Table 37: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning the contribution of poverty to food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position sees a lack of avenues out of poverty as corrosive to people's ability to escape poverty (#54). It does not see external support as important in overcoming intergenerational poverty (#55).

#	Statements	Rank	Value
<b><i>Individual fault</i></b>			
36	Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control	15	+3
17	People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices	78	-5
37	Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity	54	-1
<b><i>Education</i></b>			
58	People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support	24	+2
35	Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity	24	+2
74	Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity	24	+2
69	Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity	24	+2
75	Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity	34	+1
<b><i>Parents</i></b>			
22	Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school	24	+2
2	Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents	24	+2
19	Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes	63	-2

**Table 38: The ensuring opportunities subject position's ranking of statements concerning individual responsibility for food insecurity**

The ensuring opportunities position rejects the idea that people suffering food insecurity are necessarily to blame for their deprivation (statements #36 and #17). It also rejects, though less strongly, the idea that poor food choices contribute to food insecurity (#37). This position offers some support for a cluster of statements regarding the relationship between various forms of education and food insecurity (statements #58, #35, #74, #69 and #75).

This indicates that individual agency, as opposed to social or economic structures, does have a notable influence over a person's or household's food security status, supporting a level of individual responsibility for food insecurity. This sits well with mild support for the ideas that parents ought to be the ones feeding children (statements #22 and #2). However, this position

views child food insecurity as similar to food insecurity in general – with deprived people not necessarily to blame (#19).

Statement 25					
The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-2.18	77	-2.29	77	-1.53	75
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score	rank

Statement 26					
The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-2.4	78	-2.33	78	-1.15	70
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score	rank

Statement 48					
Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
-1.96	76	-1.75	74	0	44
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score	rank

The ensuring opportunities position rejects paternalistic measures intended to reduce deviant behaviour thought to promote food insecurity, though less strongly than the other two positions (statements #25 and #26). It also views the idea that recipients of state welfare transfers as having some form of responsibility to tax-paying citizens (#48) much more positively than the other positions.

Statement 65					
The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
1.13	11	1.26	10	-0.76	63
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score	rank

This position also views the role and responsibility of the welfare state (#65) in a different light to the other two positions, as not supporting a ‘thriving’ life.

Statement						52
The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
1.62	5	1.68	4	0	44	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

This position also less strongly supported the idea of the welfare state as a mechanism for government to act on its responsibility to ensure that people ‘do not go hungry’.

Statement						72
Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-1.9	75	-1.41	72	-0.38	54	
<i>z-score</i>	rank	<i>z-score</i>	rank	<i>z-score</i>	rank	

Concern about the burden of caring for food insecure citizens resting on charity rather than the state is significantly lower than the in other two positions.

## 7.4 Review of Subject Positions: Concern, Structure and Agency

This section will review the results, drawing comparisons between the subject position’s treatments of particular statements to clarify their characterisation. Comparison of the positions’ treatment of statements can assist in characterising positions by revealing their differing priorities. This section will also bring together elements of the positions to highlight coherence and discord within them.

The *z*-score is the distance, measured in standard deviations, from the average or centre placement of all statements.

### 7.4.1 Concern: What’s the Problem?

Statement						9
The rate of food insecurity is concerning						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
1.3	7	0.86	18	0	44	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

There is a marked decline in the strength of concern about food insecurity as a social condition (#9) through the three positions. This suggests that the ensuring opportunities position, and to an extent also the emotive concern position, view the social condition of food insecurity as ‘a concern’, as and when it is present – in a fairly abstract sense – but not so much something to



be concerned about in Aotearoa New Zealand. The weight given to statement #9 is significant when considering the position's treatment of other statements.

Statement						8
People have a ‘right to food’, comparable to their ‘right to free speech’						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
1.69	3	1.05	11	0	44	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

A similarly marked progression is evident in the position's view of food insecurity as constituting a rights problem (#8). This too should be considered as other elements of the positions are reviewed.

Statement						67
Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
0.06	40	1.4	6	1.15	15	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

The universalism of the structural adjustment position is evident in this comparison of the positions' valuing of the idea that children's food security is worthy of more assistance (#67).

An idea which several participants raised was that there will always be some food insecure people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Participant five distinguished between the principle that "no-one should go hungry" and the reality that "there's always going to be some people that go hungry" because there are "so many individual circumstances throughout the country".

#### 7.4.2 Causes

Ideas about the cause(s) of, responses to and responsibility for food insecurity are linked to the particular construction of the social condition as a problem held in the three different subject positions – or in anyone's position. A position's views about the causes of food insecurity will influence its views about which responses will be effective. Similarly, its views about where responsibility for food insecurity lies will inform its views about causes and so what responses ought to be taken, and so on.

Statement 46					
The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
1.28	8	2	2	1.91	3
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

Statement 46 is perhaps excessively nebulous, but its treatment by the three positions is informative. While all three strongly support it, the lower support by the structural adjustment position supports the characterisation of this position as concerned with the relationship between social-political and economic structures and food insecurity. A lessened variation in reasons is an increased regularity in reasons, which suggests the influence of some form of structure.

Statement 30					
Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
1.63	4	0.9	16	-0.76	63
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

The emotive concern position does not locate responsibility for food insecurity with deprived people (for instance #17 at -4, #19 at -2, #37 at -3 and #74 at -2), but also does not prioritise poverty particularly strongly as a cause (#30 at +2, the same column as #15, #78 and #59). The ensuring opportunities position offers very little support for the idea, despite viewing household finances as significant in the occurrence of food insecurity (for instance #29 at +3, #41 at +1). Its support for education as a response to food insecurity suggests that it views individuals as playing at least a part in causing food insecurity, despite its general rejection of individual culpability (#36 at +3, #37 at -1 and #17 at -5).

#### 7.4.3 Responsibility for Food Insecurity

Statement 6					
The government should ensure that people do not go hungry					
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>	
0.49	24	1.04	12	1.53	8
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>

The direction of the trend in support of the idea that central government has a responsibility for the food security of citizens (#6) might be surprising, given the emphasis of the structural

adjustment position on structure. This may indicate that governmental structures are not the (only) structures that need adjustment. For the structural adjustment position, low wages (#57 at +1, #78 at +1)<sup>25</sup>, structural unemployment (#16 at +1), structures which contribute to poverty (#30 at +4) and perhaps the welfare state (#53 at 0) are all structures which contribute to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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<sup>25</sup> Refer to Appendix B on page 156 for list of statements.

## Chapter 8 – Discussion and Conclusions: Depoliticisation and Deprivation

6		7	8	
Methods & Methodology		Results	Conclusions	
Assumptions	Responsibility and responses	Depoliticisation	Practical contributions	Looking forward

“You have to know what's under your feet/so you can make things strong enough/to take the weight/the weight of all the people who haven't been born”.

- The Mutton Birds, *Envy of Angels*

In this thesis, I have investigated how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand using two theoretical approaches (in Chapters 4 and 5) and a compatible research methodology (detailed in Chapter 6). This investigation has been built on a body of empirical research into food insecurity in rich liberal democracies (reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3). The results produced (Chapter 7) are interesting for several reasons. In this chapter, I review the assumptions made in this thesis, which are an important part of the investigation (8.1). Then, I discuss these results with reference to the theorisations of the social-economic-political context of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand in Chapters 4 and 5 (8.2).

Depoliticisation has been a significant theoretical component of this investigation and its application is original to this thesis. Three sections focus on the concept. First, I review the three subjective positions in relation to depoliticisation specifically (8.3). I then elaborate two theoretical issues with the concept that have emerged from my application of it in this thesis (8.4). Finally, I evaluate the usefulness of depoliticisation as a conceptual tool (8.5). Following this, the practical contributions of this thesis, as well as its limitations, are considered (8.6). The final section (8.7) is oriented to the future.

## 8.1 Reviewing Assumptions

In this thesis so far, I have tried to ground and reflect on the assumptions made in proceeding through each step of the investigation, and whether these are more or less contested. For instance, there is no contention about the existence of substantial food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand – the stated rhetoric of Prime Minister Key aside; there is no genuine contention within debate that involves rigorous empirical data<sup>26</sup>. The particular methods used in assessing food insecurity and their suitability might be questioned in terms of their validity or efficacy. However, methodological techniques for measuring the phenomenon having been validated in Aotearoa New Zealand (Parnell and Gray 2014). However, the data summarised in sub-section 2.3.2 is not critiqued as being of poor quality; rather, its key weakness is that it has been ineffective in swaying policy decisions or general public opinion. Furthermore, there is also significant evidence that the timing of a significant increase in food insecurity happened during the historical period after the introduction of neoliberal reforms – particularly those of the early 1990s. Consequently, I felt that I could proceed with confidence in making assertions about the degree and timing of major historical shifts in the experience of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A second set of more theoretical assumptions is more contestable. I moved from evidence of food insecurity (and its association with the neoliberal turn) to theoretical explanations based on an assumption about the hegemonic status of neoliberal political rationality in Aotearoa New Zealand and subsequently the significance of its influence on citizens' subjectivities. There may be a more nuanced theorisation of this claim, such as that it describes the portion of the public which regularly votes in national elections, or the 'Children of Rogernomics', or voters with preferences for the National and Act parties. However, the more general claim of neoliberal hegemony was made, in keeping with the more general level of analysis of the theorisation, and I used this to structure the next steps in my enquiry.

I recognise that using ideas of neoliberal hegemony to structure my theoretical enquiry (in Chapter 5) was less well-grounded relative to the structural-empirical account of food

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<sup>26</sup> The *New Zealand Herald* reported that: "Earlier this year, two bills aimed at helping hungry kids were voted down in Parliament - one from the Green Party and one from Labour. At the time, *Education Minister Hekia Parata called three schools in a survey*, and reported small numbers needing help from each. Prime Minister *John Key used that evidence to say*: 'Yes, there is an issue where some children come to school without lunch. That number of children is relatively low'" (Johnston 2015, n.p., emphasis added).

insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand (in Chapter 4). However, I suggested that strong justifications could be made for going down this path. The theories introduced in Chapters 4 and 5 suggested that neoliberal ideas are of great significance to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand – at a policy/structural and a subjective/governmentality level, respectively. This is certainly a historically reasonable assessment, and it is not such a big step to consider that neoliberal ideas are of such significance in Aotearoa New Zealand that they can be argued to be hegemonic. Indeed, the hegemony of neoliberal political rationality in policy making is strongly argued in some of the key analyses of this period (Kelsey 1997; Roper 2005). I formed my theorisations, with structural and subjective foci respectively, around this assumption.

At the subjective level, this particular assumption was able to be supported from evidence in the wider literature (for instance Hackell 2007; Nairn *et al.* 2012). It was also supported by inference from the formal political arena, in which the key tenets of ‘third way’ politics have gone largely uncontested since their introduction from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s (Anscombe 2009; Roper 2005), and in which a National-led government has implemented the extension and entrenchment of neoliberal reforms over three successive terms (Roper 2011)<sup>27</sup>.

Turning now to the results, however, the first compelling aspect is that they do not conform to the assumption of the hegemony of neoliberal ideas in informing citizens’ subjectivities. Rather, respondents overwhelmingly reject neoliberal political rationality in their treatments of the Q set. It is vital to note that the sample was not composed of ordinary citizens, but people familiar with food insecurity who were typically highly educated. The subject positions described in Chapter 7 do not, on first analysis, seem to conform to the theory of depoliticisation under neoliberal governmentality. However, on closer examination, I will argue in section 8.2 that these may actually provide revealing insights into the operation of depoliticisation, though I will not be able to offer a comprehensive analysis of this novel notion – which would require an entire subsequent body of research and evidence.

## **8.2 Responsibility and Responses**

This section will examine the relationships between the three subject positions described in Chapter 7 and the two theorisations of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand explicated in

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<sup>27</sup> Roper (2005) argues that Fifth (Clark) Labour Government retained the central tenets of the neoliberal policy regime, despite modifying employment relations legislation and instituting the large-scale in-work tax credit scheme Working for Families.

Chapters 4 and 5. The first theorisation focused on the structures of neoliberal political economy as they relate to vulnerability to food insecurity. The second focussed on how these structures may be supported and maintained by the hegemony of neoliberal political rationality as an influence on citizens' subjective positions, regarding issues of deprivation. The following summarisation of the results reveals an unevenness in the matching of theoretical expectations with participants' responses, but does so in ways that also start to reveal the complexity of subjective positioning present under neoliberal governmentality.

In Chapter 5 I described the dominant problem representation and possible reasons for assuming its general acceptance. In combination, these describe a hegemonic neoliberal citizen subjectivity that locates responsibility for food insecurity solely with the individuals who suffer it – or with the parents of food insecure children. A systemic or structural influence on who suffers food insecurity, or on how many people are food insecure, is not acknowledged by this subjective position. The subject position revealed in the results, which I have labelled the structural adjustment subject position, is completely incompatible with this theorised version of neoliberal citizen subjectivity. The other two subject positions align more with the theoretical expectations and are at least amenable to neoliberal ideas and their associated structures and practices. However, none of the three subject positions is as radical as the theorised neoliberal subjectivity. I will now review and offer some comments regarding each of the subject positions.

### *8.2.1 Structural Adjustment*

The structural adjustment subject position broadly aligns as being sympathetic with the concern expressed in Chapter 1 about the apparent distance between empirical evidence about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand and the lack of policy developed to alter the situation. The right of citizens to be free from hunger has not been adequately supported by successive governments in Aotearoa New Zealand, despite the two largest parties both calling for action while in opposition (Anscombe 2009). The discontent of the structural adjustment position with the lack of effective government action responding to food insecurity, given the empirical evidence available, is clear.

The position offers support for situating the problem of food insecurity within a right-to-food framework. Such a framework places an emphasis on the state to actively ensure the provision and protection of access to food for all citizens. Rights are conceived of as universal, though a

rights-based approach to problems is open to criticism as not being easily translated into specific actions. The structural adjustment position prioritises the pre-existing mechanism of the welfare state to support citizens' right to food, as well as regulatory action against social problems (e.g. liquor outlets, gambling and poor housing conditions) and towards an economy structured to enable people to support themselves (e.g. away from a low-wage economy, away from structural unemployment). The subject position's framing of state responsibility for, and the need for government responses against, food insecurity mark it as strongly divergent from the theorised neoliberal subjectivities.

### *8.2.2 Emotive Concern*

The emotive concern subject position has some similarities to the structural adjustment position, but in several ways can be considered to align with the theorised neoliberal subjectivities. Its concern is emotive, focussed on the health impacts of food insecurity and its being suffered by children. It does not support the universalism important to the structural adjustment position. It is concerned about food insecurity, but does not clearly allocate responsibility for the problem; it does not see the state or individuals as being particularly at fault regarding the situation and context in which this concern has arisen. Relatedly, it does not clearly support state or charitable responses to alter the situation or otherwise address the problem.

The emotive concern subject position appears to be amenable to neoliberal ideas because the concern it expresses is unfocussed. It is a concern without responsibility (individual, systemic, state or otherwise)<sup>28</sup> and which is not clearly oriented towards particular actions to lessen the incidence of/vulnerability to food insecurity. The position shows support for a strong welfare state, and for the state as generally responsible for the welfare of citizens, but this support does not correlate to a view of the state as having a central role in actions to address food insecurity.

### *8.2.3 Ensuring Opportunities*

The ensuring opportunities subject position is the most closely aligned with the theorised neoliberal subjectivities of the three positions. It might, however, be described as a tempered version of the theorised position. The position does not strongly support the self-

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<sup>28</sup> It is possible that responsibility for the problem is thought of as diffuse, perhaps as the societal loss of an ethic of care for others. This idea will be expanded in sub-section 8.4.1.



responsibilisation of food insecurity, emphasising the complexity of individuals' situations: "you can't help circumstance sometimes" (participant nine). However, it does allocate more responsibility at an individual level, compared to the other two positions, as described in subsection 7.3.4.

The ensuring opportunities subject position does not express a strong concern about the problem of food insecurity. In line with this, it does not articulate a need for a particular (novel) response; the *status quo* is not particularly objectionable. Acceptance or tolerance of the current regime of responses to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand suggests support for the *laissez faire* operation of markets. Therefore, the subject position has notable similarities to that of the theorised neoliberal subject position, but they are certainly not identical.

#### 8.2.4 Discussion

Here I will highlight several aspects of the results – the relation of the positions to empirical data, and the three positions' views regarding food banks and the welfare state.

The structural adjustment subject position seems the most attuned to the empirical evidence about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is reflected in the position's analytical tone. The relation of the other two positions to this evidence is of particular interest, because they can both be interpreted as neoliberal subjectivities, at least to some extent. As has been suggested several times in this thesis, the theorised neoliberal subject position seems to be incompatible with familiarity with the available empirical evidence. This evidence can be assumed to suggest that "the need to address issues of food security in high-income countries seems pressing" (Gorton *et al.* 2010, 2). Therefore, it is pertinent to question how the emotive concern and the ensuring opportunities subject positions relate to the empirical data reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The emotive concern position is concerned about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. This suggests that the position is aware of food insecurity as an issue through professional contact with it –whether through data or personal experience, or a mix of the two. People tend not to be concerned about things of which they are unaware. Unlike the structural adjustment position, however, this awareness and concern is not coupled with a clearly articulated preference for how to go about effectively addressing food insecurity. A pathway for change away from the concerning situation is not suggested. This is interesting, and deserves further exploration. It could be seen as a 'gap' between concern and remedial intent, though

characterisation may preclude the further investigation that this finding deserves. Why is the position silent on ways of addressing food insecurity? What might the non-articulation of a particular course of action by the subject position indicate?

The nature of the concern articulated appears to differ between the structural adjustment and emotive concern positions. The latter holds emotive concerns about food insecurity, indicated by the high priority of child food (in)security and the health effects of food insecurity for the subject position. Perhaps this more emotive concern does not so clearly imply a particular way forward. It could be described as a worry, and something worrisome is not quite the same as something problematic. Relevant to this comment is Bacchi's (2009) notion that a problem contains fault-allocation and so an indication of viable/legitimate solution(s). A worrisome concern might be less detailed or firm – not so articulate about the issue at hand.

The gap seems unlikely to suggest callous indifference, given the apparently emotive nature of the concern. A potential explanation is that the position may tolerate, if not support, the *status quo* – despite its stated concern about the rate of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is amenable to a neoliberal problem-solving pathway: *laissez faire* market resolution-solutions, the idea that markets will (eventually) solve (social) problems. There could be a number of reasons for such a tolerance – an acceptance of this cost for other benefits, an unwillingness or inability to consider alternatives, or to be pessimistic about the potential for such alternatives.

It is also possible that the Q set did not include a wide enough range of ideas to capture the positive intent (as opposed to ideas disagreed with) of participants who loaded onto the emotive concern position, but this was not apparent in interviews with the participants. There may be other ways in which the position re-interprets or otherwise responds to the empirical data not described here. The ensuring opportunities position could be said to be less familiar with the empirical evidence, given the relaxing of the participant selection criteria described in section 6.4.

I turn now to a finding of particular interest, given the major part which charity plays in responses to food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand: the three subject positions' orientation to food banks. These are a response to food insecurity favoured by neoliberal political rationality, being *ad hoc* charitable responses and voluntary actions, chosen by individuals rather than mandated by the state – “neighbour helping neighbour” (Riches 1986, 26). The three positions agreed that food banks are not especially effective.

Statement						38
Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity						
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>		
-0.47	56	-0.46	53	-0.38	54	
<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>rank</i>	

However, many participants expressed support for the work of charitable organisations. Participant nine thought that voluntary organisations offering assistance should be encouraged because there will “always” be people who are missed by support systems, who can benefit from such assistance. Participant four suggested that state responses to food insecurity should occur in partnership with charities as well as community. Therefore, positive sentiment does not appear to be necessarily tied to perceptions of efficacy.

Riches (1997a, 63) describes the acute “moral and political dilemmas of food banking”, as does Poppendieck (1994); (Poppendieck 1998a). The results suggest that food banks are supported despite not being thought of as especially effective as a measure against food insecurity. This may be due to emotive reasons: food banks “permit individuals and communities to express their feelings of common concern for their fellow human beings in very practical ways” (Riches 1997a, 62). The nature of the participant sample is relevant here again – participants were, by definition, concerned with food insecurity in some professional context.

Another area of particular interest is how the welfare state was perceived by the three positions. The structural adjustment and emotive concern subject positions positioned some element of inadequacy in the welfare state or its operation as one cause of food insecurity. Given the apparent popularity of the ‘dole bludger’ archetype in Aotearoa New Zealand, this may not be a widely shared view. The ensuring opportunities subject position located pressures on household budgets as a cause of food insecurity, but rejected welfare state inadequacy as a cause. Both of these treatments of the welfare state raise interesting questions. If the welfare state is inadequate in some way at present, what does adequacy look like? What are considered the moral and practical limits of such a system? Does familiarity with empirical evidence regarding food insecurity dispose people to view the welfare state in a particular way, or is this a separate political view? Is it possible to disentangle these? If budgets of some households are not being put under pressure by benefit levels, which some people consider inadequate, then where is this pressure coming from? These and many more questions deserve further investigation.

In Chapter 5, I introduced the concept of depoliticisation and suggested that it is analytically useful, for instance to generate insights into the operation of neoliberal governmentality. In the next sections, I review the concept. As already noted, I am not aware of depoliticisation being engaged in the manner I have in this thesis, or being applied in depth to the area of food insecurity. This novel theorisation requires a review, which the next sections provide. I first examine depoliticisation in relation to the three subjective positions (8.3), then elaborate two theoretical issues with the concept which emerged in applying it in this thesis (8.4). Following this, I review its use in this thesis and discuss its usefulness more generally as a conceptual tool (8.5).

### **8.3 Results: Evidence of Depoliticisation?**

The theorisation of food insecurity as a depoliticised issue in this thesis did not match the dominant responses from participants in a straightforward fashion. However, the application of the concept of depoliticisation to the social condition of food insecurity remains a relevant, useful and persuasive explanation. It potentially accounts for the work done by neoliberal governmentality in the construction food insecurity as a problem of and for individuals, and the way that this self-responsibilisation transfers the costs of political contingency from governments to individuals. Understood as an aspect of the operation of neoliberal governmentality, it is compatible with the wider influence of neoliberal ideas at both policy and subjective levels. Consequently, I want to reflect in more depth on the way in which depoliticisation could be argued to relate to the subject positions.

#### **Contestation**

The dominant subject position in the results, the structural adjustment position, represents perhaps the most interesting group, because it does not conform to the assumption about the dominance of neoliberal subjectivity within the theorisation of food insecurity as depoliticised. The position explicitly politicises the social condition of food insecurity at several points. First, the state is judged to have the role of ensuring, and a moral obligation to ensure, the food security of its citizens. Second, the welfare state is thought to have a role in supporting the lives of the unfortunate in society, and judged to be failing in this function. Adjustments to it are suggested as a necessary beginning for bringing about solutions to food insecurity. Third,

policy responses – actions by the government – are suggested as being important to effectively addressing the incidence of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The structural adjustment position, and its dominance in the results, reveals that depoliticisation must be understood as at least a heterogeneous phenomenon: it is not uncontested. If depoliticisation is understood as an aspect of a hegemonic but contested governmentality, the structural adjustment position is counter-hegemonic in its rejection of the neoliberal re-envisioning of the relationship between state and citizen. It positions the state as central to effective efforts to address food insecurity and factors that contribute to it. This finding certainly supports caution in characterising neoliberalism(s) without thorough research illuminating the particular context(s), responses and operation(s) of a particular time and place, as Larner (2000) argues.

The complexity of this contestation is deepened by various aspects of the other two subject positions, which align to different degrees with elements of the theorised neoliberal subject position. Both the emotive concern position and the ensuring opportunities position are amenable to elements of the theorised neoliberal position, but both also have their differences from it, some more notable than others. The theorised neoliberal subject position, then, is not only contested by ‘an opposition’, a counter-hegemonic position represented by the structural adjustment subject position. Other contestation(s), perhaps more complex, can be seen in the non-cohesive articulation of elements of the structural adjustment position in the emotive concern and the ensuring opportunities subject positions. This invites further investigation but will not be pursued here.

#### Consensus

Revisiting areas of consensus across the three subject positions is revealing when considering the depoliticisation of food insecurity. A degree of agreement around some ideas demonstrates that the distance between politicisation and depoliticisation is not necessarily one of absolute and antagonistic disagreement.

Statement				66
The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food				
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>
-1.56	73	-1.8	76	-1.15 70
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score rank

These findings indicate that depoliticisation, which I have suggested is evident to a small degree in both the emotive concern and the ensuring opportunities subject positions, should not be considered to require the erasure of the idea of state responsibility (#66). That is, the idea of state responsibility for citizens' food security can co-exist with a reduction in the expectation of state action, or a dispersal of responsibility away from the state, or the incorporation of charity into the welfare state and the notion of assistance as a privilege rather than a right. Indeed, it is possible that ideas of self-responsibilisation are actually strengthened by the idea that the state does offer (adequate) assistance to those in (*genuine*) need. Given such support, it may be easy to conceive of those who are still food insecure as suffering through their own poor choices.

Statement				25
The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices				
<i>structural adjustment</i>		<i>emotive concern</i>		<i>ensuring opportunities</i>
-2.18	77	-2.29	77	-1.53 75
z-score	rank	z-score	rank	z-score rank

Viewing individuals as needing to have the ability to make what are judged as poor choices taken away (#25) is another idea with a strong degree of consensus, based on its rejection. If depoliticisation involves the complicit politicisation of individuals, then the three subject positions do not appear to accept this. Perhaps depoliticisation need not involve the politicisation of individuals, or perhaps participants did not recognise this process in this way. It may be that the idea of restricting choices is simply too authoritarian and paternalistic to be contemplated as acceptable in Aotearoa New Zealand. Again, there is room for further investigation here.

It might be argued from these results that depoliticisation is both tied to notional principles – self-responsibility, for example – and at the same time not bound to principles which might be expected to be co-located – for instance, the anti-statist orientation of neoliberal political rationality. Depoliticisation, then, appears to be flexible. This may help to explain the way that

the concern about food insecurity expressed by the emotive concern subject position does not itself politicise the social condition of food insecurity, despite this position articulating support for a strong welfare state.

None of the subject positions explicitly articulated self-responsibility for sufferers of food insecurity. Cross- position comparison, though, shows that the ensuring opportunities position supports the idea of effective responses to food insecurity as existing at the level of individuals – particularly education. This suggests the construction of the problem of food insecurity as at least in part due to a lack of education among people suffering food insecurity, locating responsibility with them. It is possible that a position could view individuals as culpable for their own food insecurity and still view state co-ordinated and resourced measures to address food security as the most effective and preferable means of addressing food insecurity – truly ‘no strings attached’ assistance. That is, self-responsibilisation could exist without depoliticisation. However, this seems unlikely; the two are conceptually a strong pairing.

This kind of operation of depoliticisation and its contestation seem to be consistent with Hall’s (2001) theoretical articulation of hegemony. That is, both neoliberal governmentality and the depoliticisation of deprivation are ongoing processes, dominant but not uncontested, and engaged with by different people and individuals in different ways. A moment in Aotearoa New Zealand where the depoliticisation of deprivation appeared to be rolled back was the prominence of discussion about child poverty leading up to the 2014 national elections. While this did not appear to affect substantially the rhetoric of the National Party, or voting patterns, there was discussion in public forums about child poverty – the deprivation of the innocent. Baird (2008) has termed ‘child fundamentalism’ the association of opposition to childrens’ detriment with a cause, described as lending the cause an element of unassailability. This seems likely to continue to play a major role in attempts to prompt change in structures and subjectivities that support or exacerbate the detrimental impacts of neoliberal practices on the majority of people’s lives.

#### Possible Reasons for Disjuncture

There are two particularly important observations that bear on the disjuncture between the theorisation of food insecurity as a depoliticised issue and the findings of the Q methodology study. The first, as described in section 5.4.2, is that hegemony can be – indeed, always is – contested. It is “a process, not a state of being”, and is not total, with “counter-movements,

resistance, alternative strategies and visions” contesting its claims – and its dominance (Hall 2011, 727). Foregrounding the processional and contested nature of hegemony, contestation is to be expected. Again, one interpretation of the structural adjustment subject position is that it represents a coherent counter-hegemonic position.

The second observation about the theorisation-results disjuncture is that the p-set does not represent the general public. An investigation of the strength of the theorising in Chapter 5 regarding citizens’ subjectivities, and the depoliticisation of food insecurity is a large task. This offers an avenue for interesting future research, but could not be addressed in this thesis.

The p-set should not be considered to represent the general public – methodology aside – because of their characteristics. Based on a demographic questionnaire completed by some participants, I suggest that key characteristics of the p-set as a group might include: (1) being highly educated; (2) being engaged with the social condition of food insecurity; (3) having a high level of institutional employment security (which may constitute a secure position to express an opinion from); (4) being of generations exposed to economic models other than neoliberal political economy; and (5) generally being politically left-leaning. These characteristics, in some combination, provide one possible explanation for the counter-hegemonic positioning of participants who comprised the structural adjustment position – and so for their stark divergence from the subject position theorised in Chapter 5.

The apparent lack of influence of the views of these participants on policy formation is extremely important. Many of the characteristics of this group are suggestive of hegemonic structural positions – many participants are part of an elite in terms of education, financial security and perhaps also influence. Why does this group, despite their characteristics – securely employed, highly educated, financially secure – appear to lack power, or at least policy influence in their area of speciality? Perhaps the formation of policy is less evidence-based than dominated by ideological orientations, budgetary concerns, or vote-garnering considerations?

These and other important questions that emerge from my research deserve further consideration in subsequent work. However, at the very least, I suggest that my research identifies that a strong and clearly articulated counter-hegemonic subject position exists. This is important because it means that the ideas and rationales that have the potential to inform policy intended to effectively reduce food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand are present. One way



forward for anti-hunger advocates is to seek to empower such subjectivities: they do not need reinventing, they are already there waiting to be empowered.

## **8.4 Elaborating Depoliticisation**

This section interrogates depoliticisation as a theoretical concept along two avenues. Both of these are concerned with the location of the process that I have identified and described as depoliticisation and both elaborate the concept in ways prompted by my application of it in this thesis. The avenue first questions whether what is happening is not the loss of politicisation (at least in appearance) as much as a loss of social or cultural values. The second avenue questions the whether the basis of depoliticisation lies in government action or the operation of governmentality(ies).

### *8.4.1 Depoliticisation or Cultural Shift?*

In the course of the research, a tension has emerged between characterisations of food insecurity as a problem of structural governance (centred on inadequate state responses to food insecurity) and food insecurity as a problem of societal malaise. I suggest that these can be characterised as an inadequate response to food insecurity due to a governance-based moral judgment, and an inadequate social response to food insecurity due to the atomisation of individuals within society, respectively.

To clarify: what I have called the ‘depoliticisation of deprivation’ is rooted in the discursive characterisation of individuals as being to blame for their suffering deprivation; it is their fault for not playing the game properly. What are, empirically speaking, inadequate responses to food insecurity are based on an ethical judgement that deprivation is suffered by those who have failed: they were not good market actors; they did not work hard enough; they did not properly develop their human capital; they did not take any and all opportunities, and so on<sup>29</sup>. Neoliberal governmentality offers a strong explanation for this inadequate response: people are disciplined for their failure to discipline themselves to be good citizens – that is, successful actors in markets – by being interpolated as ‘undeserving poor’ and thus un(der)assisted.

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<sup>29</sup> The film *Nightcrawler* (Gilroy 2014) offers an intriguing picture of a man’s development of himself and his enterprise in line with the clichés of the American corporate world, disregarding conventional social and ethical conduct.

Alternately, inadequate responses to food insecurity could be rooted in a pervasive and potent culture of individualism – what has been called the atomisation of society elsewhere, and which is caught in Margaret Thatcher’s quip that “there’s no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families” (The Guardian 2013). In this case, locating responsibility for deprivation with the deprived is not justified through the morality of market logics. Rather, the dissolution of social relations sees the *de-socialisation*<sup>30</sup> of what are still referred to as social problems; no-one is responsible for anyone else, whether they are deprived or not.

I would not suggest that these two possible roots of food insecurity – depoliticisation and the de-socialisation of governance and culture – are not linked. It certainly seems that structural neoliberal reforms and the development of neoliberal governmentality can effect a cultural transition towards an atomised society. Roper (2005) argues persuasively that the neoliberal social and economic reforms were negatively received by the public in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1980s. Today, however, there does not appear to be significant broad resistance to the continuation and deepening of the neoliberal policy agenda, and as I revealed with some of my research material, citizens’ subjectivities are inflected with neoliberal political rationality. The difference between these two historical moments reveals the kind of cultural transition instigated by the neoliberal turn discussed in this thesis.

I would tentatively suggest that the two positions – initially anti-neoliberal and more recently accepting (though not without contestation) – are potentially complementary; they foreground different aspects of neoliberal thought – the primacy of the individual<sup>31</sup>, as well as the ethical superiority of markets. The situations that they describe also appear to be linked. However, it is possible that approaching food insecurity as a product or function of neoliberal governmentality (via depoliticisation), as this thesis does, does not sufficiently describe the culture of individualism that isolates people, dissolving notions of responsibility for others, while elevating markets into the conceptual space once filled by society.

As far as this thesis goes, this coupling of these ideas works: the theorised depoliticisation of deprivation through neoliberal governmentality marketising governing relations offers the

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<sup>30</sup> The more accurate, if ungainly, term would be *desocietalisation*.

<sup>31</sup> Thatcher again: “What’s irritated me about the whole direction of politics in the last 30 years is that it’s always been towards the collectivist society. People have forgotten about the personal society. And they say: do I count, do I matter? To which the short answer is, yes” (Butt 1981, n.p.).

strongest explanation of non-action around food insecurity, and discourse of laziness, poor budgeting skills and so on point to the ‘failed market actor’ forming a category of the ‘underserving poor’. This is something that researchers addressing issues around the dynamics of neoliberal society may want to continue to consider in wider contexts.

#### *8.4.2 Depoliticisation: By Government or Governmentality?*

I will explicate ‘preference-shaping depoliticisation’, as characterised by Flinders and Buller (2006a), then progress to examine the location or basis of processes of depoliticisation.

The general focus of work that has engaged the governmental definition of depoliticisation has been directed towards purposive action by the state (Buller and Flinders 2005; Burnham 2001, 2011, 2014; Flinders and Buller 2006a, b; Jessop 2014). Despite this, I suggest that preference-shaping depoliticisation, as characterised by Flinders and Buller (2006a), is amenable to the consideration of citizen subjectivities, and can provide one way of explaining how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Flinders and Buller (2006a, 308) explain that preference-shaping depoliticisation may be achieved through politicians denying the “availability of a political choice[...] in favour of either an insistence that a certain issue is beyond the domain of political control, or that a single rational and technically correct solution to a specific problem exists”<sup>32</sup>. Whichever justification is employed, the end is the same: “a refusal to intervene or regulate a certain issue” (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 308). This refusal “may consume high levels of political capital as politicians may be repeatedly forced to justify their position” (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 308).

Preference-shaping depoliticisation, in practice:

involve[s] the construction of a new ‘reality’ in which the role of national politicians, particularly at the national level, is presented as having been, to some extent, eviscerated by external forces or broad societal factors. These forces limit the flexibility of national politicians and reduce their role to managing and enforcing rule-based tactics or policy stances which are designed to alleviate the negative consequences of trends for which national politicians cannot reasonably be held responsible. (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 308)

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<sup>32</sup> Jürgen Habermas’ comments on depoliticisation and the public sphere are relevant here: “The depoliticisation of the mass of the population and the decline of the public realm as a political institution are components of a system of domination that tends to exclude practical questions from public discussion” (in Flinders and Buller 2006a, 307). One such practical question might be *how ought access to food be allocated?* Or another, *given that there is a persistent incidence of food insecurity in our society, how ought we best respond?*

The notion of the construction of a ‘new reality’ is compatible with the concept of governmentality. Both relate to how people perceive and engage with the world – their subjectivities. These subjectivities can be regarded as novel in their being historically specific –the particular inflection of a governmentality is a ‘new reality’ for those subject to it. This describes the social-political context previously described in section 5.1. Neoliberal governmentality produces a social-political context in which the role of national politicians is ‘reduced to managing and enforcing’ the rules of markets.

In the remainder of this sub-section, I question whether the role of governments in the depoliticisation of deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand is less substantial than generally suggested in work applying a governmental definition of depoliticisation. The dominant problem representation of food insecurity in this country, described in section 5.2 constructs the social condition as a matter of self-responsibility. It is thus beyond the purview of the (neoliberal) state, outside both its control and its responsibility.

There is significant and meaningful overlap between Flinders and Buller’s (2006a) descriptive analysis of governed reality as a function of preference-shaping depoliticisation and a description of the depoliticising work of neoliberal governmentality. The defining difference between the two lies in the question of *where* the work of depoliticisation is theorised to be located. Are agents of the state solely responsible for the depoliticisation of deprivation? Is food insecurity a depoliticised issue because of specific and calculated actions by governments? Alternatively, is it a depoliticised issue because the operation of neoliberal governmentality shapes normative expectations about individual actions within apolitical, free markets, so that deprivation represents deviance and fault?

I suggest that the two might actually be considered as complimentary, with their relative significance being determined by chronology. That is, the *present* social-political context can be explained as being (re)produced by neoliberal governmentality, maintained and shaped by government, but not initiated by it. Flinders and Buller (2006a, 307) refer to Mary Douglas’ argument that a “dominant rationality” works to silently shape the content of public discussion and what is considered normal. If neoliberal political rationality is well established in Aotearoa New Zealand, as I suggested in sub-section 5.4.2, then while government may espouse neoliberal rhetoric in justifying its (in)actions, it does not routinely – and does not need to – articulate the substance of a neoliberal governance position. The population is not only familiar with neoliberal rationality; it is accustomed to it in the sense that it is embedded in “common sense and everyday

behaviour” (Hall 2011, 728).

It follows that while the work of depoliticisation may have – during the historical introduction and embedding of neoliberal rationalities – involved the degree of governmental work in preference shaping that Flinders and Buller (2006a) describe, this may no longer be the case. My suggestion, then, is that the depoliticisation of deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand today may be more an aspect of neoliberal governmentality – arising as a matter of course – than an aspect of government manoeuvring – contingent on a governing strategy.

The way that Flinders and Buller (2006a) account for governmental incorporation of ideology in enacting depoliticisation offers some support for this sequencing. Their description captures the rising hegemony of neoliberal political rationality in policy formation and increasingly as an influence on ‘common sense’ thinking, from the beginning of policy reforms in 1984 through the 1990s and onwards:

Governments may seek to espouse or over-emphasise a distinct aspect or interpretation of an ideology in order to increase the potency of the line of reasoning being presented. The preference-shaping tactic is, therefore, potentially far-reaching in that it attempts to refine and change public expectations about both the capacity of the state and the responsibilities of politicians. (Flinders and Buller 2006a, 308)

If neoliberal political rationality has become hegemonic in Aotearoa New Zealand, this is in no small part built on the work of previous governments, unrelentingly articulating, insisting, and naturalising<sup>33</sup>: ‘there is no alternative’. The work of depoliticising deprivation by neoliberal governmentality today, therefore, rests on decades of wider governmental preference-shaping work – on the evolution and embedding of neoliberal governmentality in this country. The ‘far-reaching’ effects that Flinders and Buller suggest may result from governmental preference-shaping depoliticisation – may have indeed come about in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I have suggested that deprivation may be depoliticised through market governance, which itself goes largely unquestioned and unchallenged as a function of the hegemony of neoliberal governmentality. In this scenario, the work of depoliticisation (and of preference shaping more generally) shifts from governments to neoliberal governmentality – dispersed in common sense, not

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<sup>33</sup> Hall (2011, 711) argues that neoliberalism trans-codes ideas of classical liberalism, ideas which “have long been inscribed in social practices and institutions and sedimented into the ‘habitus’ of everyday life, common sense and popular consciousness” in western cultures, easing its entrenchment. Hackell (2013) describes how the neoliberalisation of the citizenship regime in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1990s involved the re-articulation of pre-existing cultural mores.

centralised or agentically purposive.

Flinders and Buller (2006a, 308, emphasis in original) describe governmental preference-shaping depoliticisation as relying on “the dissemination of normative beliefs that may be extremely powerful even though the empirical evidence on which they are based is debated – the creation of what could be termed an *atmythsphere*”. This rather neat term offers a way to grasp the work done by the government in supporting, shaping and maintaining the bulk of the work of depoliticisation done by neoliberal governmentality. Specifically, a government articulates the particularities of the myths in the *atmythsphere*, drawing on a neoliberal political rationality already present and absorbed. In this way, the depoliticisation of deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand today could be linked to embedded and familiar routines of neoliberal governmentality.

The role of governments in this image of depoliticisation is the earlier work of establishing neoliberal political rationality, as well as activating or referring to aspects of the established governmentality when justifying (regimes of) (in)actions. This appears to align with the observations about rhetoric surrounding food insecurity in problem representations made in section 5.2.

This sub-section has troubled aspects of the concept of depoliticisation. The final sub-section (8.5) will evaluate and explore the usefulness of the concept of depoliticisation as a theoretical tool.

### **8.5 Depoliticisation: A Useful Concept?**

As Foster *et al.* (2014) note, there is widespread agreement that depoliticisation is relevant to analyses of contemporary government: “we all agree that it is happening, we’re just not entirely agreed on *what* precisely is happening” (2014, 226, emphasis in original). This thesis can only offer a preliminary analysis of food insecurity as a depoliticised social condition, and a limited attempt at characterising citizen subjectivities regarding food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand and its social-political-economic situation. While it is clear that the depoliticisation of food insecurity is contested, the extent and details – character, basis, conditions – of this contestation require further investigation. However, some reflection is possible on the kinds of debates within the depoliticisation approach that I have surveyed in Chapter 5 and earlier in Chapter 8.

The concept of depoliticisation has never, to my knowledge, been applied in a setting like the one considered in this thesis – at the micro-level, focussed on subjectivities. This provides an interesting opportunity to reflect on its development as a theoretical perspective. Contributions to the special issue of *Policy & Politics* focused on *Depoliticisation, governance and the state*<sup>34</sup> did substantial work, not least bridging the gap between depoliticisation and governmentality (Foster *et al.* 2014). Still, most applications of the concept have been structural – analyses of top-down manipulations of perceptions using structures, institutions and systems for political gain. How depoliticisation is achieved, for what ends, and what it is in aid of, have been the focus of analyses that have used the concept so far.

As Foster *et al.* (2014) note, it is far easier to observe depoliticisation, in a vague manner, than to characterise it. I have suggested that the application of depoliticisation in this thesis does enable the characterisation of an aspect of neoliberal governmentality. Theorisations of governmentality in Aotearoa New Zealand suggest that neoliberal political rationality has a broad influence, and this appear to be supported by the results. The subject position least similar to the theorised neoliberal subject position, the structural adjustment position, explicitly politicised food insecurity. As a way to generate insight into the dynamic of neoliberal societies, depoliticisation has shown promise in this thesis, but it needs further interrogation, application, explanation and refining.

What is indisputably original about this thesis is that it is the first applied investigation of depoliticisation in the context of food insecurity. Earlier work concerned with issues around food insecurity have briefly mentioned depoliticisation as something that is happening, without engaging the idea in depth. For example: “food banks have served to depoliticise the issue of hunger in Canada by undermining the governments' legislated obligations” (Riches 1997a, 62). I have argued cogently that the concept is useful for engaging with food insecurity specifically. A degree of success in this specific application suggests that the concept offers a promising way to engage with what I have characterised as the depoliticisation of deprivation in rich liberal democracies, of which food insecurity is one aspect.

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<sup>34</sup> Volume 42, Number 2, April 2014.

My application of depoliticisation in this thesis has provided a way to engage an analysis of both social problems in a neoliberal context, and aspects of neoliberal society more generally, in a novel way. The results of the Q methodology investigation have raised a number of interesting questions about depoliticisation and the possible ways in which it operates.

I theorised depoliticisation as part of the extension of a structural theorisation of the neoliberal turn in Aotearoa New Zealand into a more post-structural focus on subjectivities and governmentalities. In this capacity, it offers a way to understand vulnerability to food security in a neoliberal society as produced by both structures of political economy and subjective positions. This reinforces the contestable nature of the “separation between the political and the economic” (Lemke 2002 in Foster *et al.* 2014, 235) constructed by neoliberal governmentality. It also supports the more post-structural theorisation of the neoliberal turn as both significant and necessary.

The results challenged the theorisation in Chapter 5, and this prompted me to reconsider how depoliticisation can contribute to thinking about social conditions in neoliberal societies.

Burnham understands depoliticisation as a “governing strategy”, “*the process of placing at one remove the political character of decision making*” (2001, 128, emphasis in original). Flinders and Buller (2006a) map means by which governments go about this. Foster *et al.* (2014) describe depoliticisation as sharing some key common ground with neoliberal governmentality, and argue that depoliticisation is an intrinsic aspect of this governmentality. Building on these theorisations, I have constructed a complex account of depoliticisation as an element of neoliberal governmentality that is clearly strongly contested within some subject positions. It is therefore, perhaps, less hegemonic at a subjective level than might be expected, if neoliberal governmentality is hegemonic in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The possibility remains that Roper (2005) is correct, and citizens in Aotearoa New Zealand do reject neoliberalism. In this case, the results here may indicate that depoliticisation can be more suitably applied to social conditions in Aotearoa New Zealand at the level of structure/policy rather than subjectivity/governmentality. Alternately, the demographically peculiar nature of the group of participants in the Q methodology investigation may explain the apparent dominance of a counter-hegemonic subject position. In this case, the results reinforce Larner’s critique of a solely structural theorisation of neoliberalism in favour of a more post-structural



and locally specific approach that takes account of specificities of context, subjectivity and contestation.

Put another way: the theoretical idea of depoliticisation, when applied, does seem to suggest that a more post-structural approach to understanding neoliberalism is warranted. This leads directly to my next observation about the significance of my research for understanding how we theorise neoliberalism. An explanation grounded in depoliticisation has the potential to speak to structures, but it may also speak to how we view the *structuring* of the power to address hunger. For instance, it could influence “who is authorised to speak in the first place and which authority (roles, institutions and the taken-for-granted understandings) support the claims” they make (Guzzini 2005, 516). The depoliticisation of deprivation – of suffering – could also work to remove the dimension of being ‘powerless’ as a basis for being deprived. A consequence of this removal would be the erasure of an acknowledgement of ‘power’ and thus ‘ability to alter’ structures, systems and situations. Analogously, concern about a deviant and detached ‘underclass’ in Aotearoa New Zealand has, for the most part, been expressed without acknowledgement of the logical existence of an *overclass*, a group in some way privileged.

## **8.6 Practical Contributions and Limitations**

This project intended to produce some practical contributions to efforts against food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. I would modestly suggest that the project has created some potential to understand and act differently in response to this problem.

Before examining this, I will note that there are no specific policy prescriptions here. These already exist; they have been produced and will continue to be admirably refined by the kind of people who agreed to participate in this research. The practical contributions of this thesis, then, are more abstract.

First, the results of the Q methodology research illustrate some areas of consensus between the three positions, despite their conflicting priorities and expressed beliefs on many ideas. The consensus statements have already been detailed in section 7.1.2, so a selective summary will be presented here.

The three subject positions agreed that ‘Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry’ (#3). Significantly, the positions also strongly rejected the idea that ‘The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food’ (#66). Consistent but mild support for the statement

that ‘A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people’s basic needs’ (#76) suggests that the welfare system is still a practical and ideologically plausible means to address food insecurity. The subject positions do not explicitly locate individuals as carrying culpability for food insecurity. Nor do they endorse paternalistic measures to correct individuals’ deviant behaviour (#25 and #26). The idea that ‘Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it’ was consistently not strongly supported (#49), though the reasons for this potential barrier not being more significant are numerous.

Consensus here does not, of course, indicate consensus in the wider population – particularly given the particularities of my group of participants. However, it is possible that these represent a core of ideas that are at least *less* contested amongst citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand. If so, this would form a beginning from which advocacy against food insecurity might proceed. This may also provide some criteria for focusing efforts against food insecurity – where particular notions are accepted, these would be easier to reinforce. As participant nine said; “No-one should go hungry, I think it’s just more about what are the pathways, or how do you make sure that they don’t go hungry is where the disagreement is”.

The thesis foregrounds the (depolitical) substance of the gap between the neoliberal policy agenda supported by recent governments and the strongly supported structural adjustment subject position. While this may not be a particularly novel idea, it provides support for advocates against deprivation generally, and food insecurity specifically; there is a more or less cohesive body of support for structural change to address these issues in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Second, the language of rights – ‘right to food’, ‘right to freedom from hunger’ – sadly appears not to be a useful register at which to address food insecurity. Participant eight explained that ‘rights language rankles me’, but that it is the language rather than the sentiment of ‘what’s best for health’ or what ‘kids deserve’ which does not sit well. Therefore, advocates against food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand may do well to steer clear of a ‘pro-rights’ message – primarily a matter of phrasing. One of the three respondents interviewed as part of the process of generating the Q set suggested that a pragmatic response to food insecurity, and deprivation more generally, might seek to address ‘low-hanging fruit’ first, and bolster support for further

measures through the demonstrable success in remedying what are often the most grievous harms of deprivation.

Third, many participants expressed sympathy to references to children as victims of food insecurity – as captured in particular in the emotive concern subject position. This can be regarded as a manifestation of what Baird (2008) terms ‘child fundamentalism’, the use of the figure of ‘the child’ by political and social causes to advance their particular agenda. This mobilises the ‘fundamental’ importance of protecting children as an irreproachable motivation for the associated agenda. There is some potential for success in using ‘child hunger’ to address food security concerns as the innocence ‘fundamentally’ associated with children is incompatible with the neoliberal discourse of individual responsibility for deprivation.

This effort at re-politicising elements of deprivation opposes the outcomes of neoliberal policy but does not appear to contest neoliberal discourse directly. Of course, this abandons the universalism expressed by the structural adjustment position. Emphasising the importance of assistance to children may provide an ideological wedge, but this prioritisation abandons many in similar circumstances. As such, this approach is open to criticism on the grounds of ceding crucial ideological ground to the hegemonic neoliberal political rationality – an old political dynamic. The figure of ‘the child’ has seen increasing use recently to voice opposition to the outcomes of neoliberal policy – in particular, increasing poverty, deprivation and hunger – and to build public concern. The 2014 election campaign saw a measure of success in generating public discussion on these issues, but apparently not to the extent necessary to shift a majority of votes.

## **8.7 Looking Forward**

The theorisation in this thesis is based on the assumption that citizen subjectivities – informed by neoliberal governmentality – sustain the gap between empirical evidence and effective policy formation. There is an alternative potential explanation, detailed by Field (2014, i): “current policymaking systems are ad hoc and non-deliberate, informal relationships are the primary channel by which evidence informs bureaucrats’ decision making and the powerful role of meta-level policy is largely unknown”. This could be a complementary explanation. Interestingly, Field also found that the trends of neoliberal governmentality were having an effect in this area:

Concurrently the trend for sovereign government to be replaced by governance mechanisms and a government agenda to give science a greater role in policymaking are shifting established policy processes. These factors, together with a growing realisation that public health nutrition policymaking needs a paradigm shift, are creating opportunities for advocacy for the use of evidence. (2014, i)

Whether such a shift might include structural adjustments to reduce food insecurity, or to improve nutrition outcomes, is an open question.

Future research might find a use for the subject positions articulated in this thesis, or for the theorisation of the depoliticisation of deprivation as a compelling aspect of a neoliberal society. Investigating the views concerning food insecurity of the general public, or of another particular group, such as food bank donors or people with a preference for right-wing politics, offers an interesting avenue for research. Positioning food banks, or national food policy (such as it is), or references to food security by regional government within an examination of neoliberal political rationality might be interesting. The interaction of neoliberal governmentality, the ‘shadow of the third world’ and food insecurity in Aotearoa may also be an interesting area for research.

Other ideas touched on in this thesis also offer rich fields for further research. The potential for deploying child fundamentalism as a strategy to combat the complicit politicisation of individuals by neoliberal governmentality is of potential interest to advocates against deprivation in rich liberal democracies. Research into child fundamentalism as a dynamic in rich liberal democracies generally would be interesting; but an evaluation of its use as a strategy for advocacy against deprivation may offer significant insight into contestation of key tenets of the hegemonic neoliberal political rationality. Such a strategy might be hoped to make visible the damage done by the structures of the neoliberal political economy – its costs – and perhaps also the entirely contingent nature of those structures.

The neoliberal catchphrase ‘a hand up not a handout’, deployed in the eradication of a welfare state supporting universal social inclusion, can be usefully applied to the role of food banks in addressing food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Food banks can be said to offer a handout, with more or less conditions attached, for people in need. Thus, their charitable model, particularly given its demonstrated inadequacy in coping with the scale and persistence of food insecurity in rich liberal democracies, ought to be the subject of disapproval for its assistance of the undeserving poor. Another blow to the efficacy of food banks comes from many people being ashamed or embarrassed about using their services (Gorton et al. 2010; Tarasuk and

Beaton 1990; Woodhouse 1999). The question that arises from these observations is ‘where is the ‘hand up’?’ A ‘hand up’ would conform to Watts and Bohle’s recommendation regarding responses to vulnerability:

the prescriptive and normative response to vulnerability is to reduce exposure, enhance coping capacity, strengthen recovery potential and bolster damage control (ie minimize destructive consequences) via private and public means. (1993, 118)

The thrust of all three of the subject positions that I identified can be included in such a response. Structural adjustment can facilitate broad support for the living standards of those people whom the structures of the neoliberal political economy do not support. Support at the local level, of the sort that the emotive concern subject position seems most amenable to, in the form of charitable institutions and other support agencies is necessary to support households with a range of particular problems, face-to-face and over time. Equal opportunities for people to access their own food, unlighted by circumstance or misfortune, supports the eradication of a persistent and alarming level of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The occurrence of food insecurity in a food secure, rich liberal democracy merits investigation. Beginning with a description of the empirical reality of food insecurity in this country, this thesis has provided answers to the question ‘how does food insecurity come to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?’ with two theorisations and a Q methodology investigation. The answer in Chapter 4 highlights the operation of particular political economic structures as producing vulnerability to food insecurity. In this context, ‘food security’ refers more to the security enjoyed by actors who thrive in the structures of the neoliberal political economy. This is security for commercial activity, for ‘business as usual’ – a peculiar term given the historical novelty of this form of political economy.

The answer offered in Chapter 5 foregrounds the erasure of the structural and systemic in how food insecurity is thought about. That is, the loss of the understanding that “suffering can be social, political and collective” and not merely individual (Stringer 2014, 3). This explanation attributes the persistence of food insecurity to the constitution of a social-political context that support political economic structures. This explanation points to the erasure of the political dimension of deprivation in this context as supported by an *atmythsphere*, by a hegemonic political rationality and by the operation of neoliberal governmentality at all levels. When viewed with the material and empirically researched reality of food insecurity in mind, the

disempowerment of people's access to food is violent, and the depoliticisation of food insecurity is ruthless.

The findings in Chapter 7 provides answers in terms of the necessity of understanding the theorised hegemony of neoliberal political rationality as a *contested* way of thinking about food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The nature of this contestation emphasises the complexity of the relations between political rationalities and subjectivities. It also emphasises the potential for change in the ways that food insecurity is thought about, and subsequently responded to, in Aotearoa New Zealand. This suggests the questions 'how *can* food insecurity be thought about in Aotearoa New Zealand?', and subsequently, 'how *can* food insecurity *stop* coming to be in Aotearoa New Zealand?'. These are compelling questions for future research, and for the future of this country.

When I started this thesis, I wanted to find out how food insecurity comes to be in Aotearoa New Zealand. I conclude by arguing that this question can now be fully elaborated as how the problem of food insecurity comes to be: thought about, constituted in policy, enacted in individual subjectivity, quite hegemonic and yet also resisted, situated in structural vulnerability, and, above all – depoliticised – in Aotearoa New Zealand. In answering this question in such a complicated way, I hope to do justice to a frustrating, yet solvable, social problem in Aotearoa New Zealand. By arriving at the theoretical idea of depoliticisation and applying it to ideas of vulnerability and deprivation, I hope that this thesis has taken a small step towards making those solutions more thinkable.

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## Appendix A. Post-Sort Demographic Survey

### Demographic Information

Participant ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. What is your age today?

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#### 2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

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#### 3. Which ethnic group do you belong to?

- ☐ New Zealand European
- ☐ Māori
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Island Maori
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ other such as DUTCH, JAPANESE, TOKELAUAN. Please state
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

---

#### 4. Do you know the name(s) of your iwi (tribe or tribes)? If so, please write it/them below

---

**5. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?**

- ☐ NZ School Certificate in one or more subjects or National Certificate level 1 or NCEA level 1
- ☐ NZ Sixth Form Certificate in one or more subjects or National Certificate level 2 or NZ UE before 1986 in one or more subjects or NCEA level 2
- ☐ NZ Higher School Certificate or Higher Leaving Certificate or NZ University Bursary / Scholarship or National Certificate level 3 or NCEA level 3 or NZ Scholarship
- ☐ Bachelors degree or equivalent
- ☐ Post-graduate degree or equivalent
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

---

**6. In which ways did you yourself get income in the previous 12 months?**

- ☐ wages, salary, commissions,
- ☐ bonuses, etc., paid by my employer
- ☐ self-employment, or business I own and work in
- ☐ interest, dividends, rent, other investments
- ☐ regular payments from ACC or a private work accident insurer
- ☐ New Zealand Superannuation or Veteran's Pension
- ☐ other superannuation, pensions or annuities (other than NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension or war pensions)
- ☐ Unemployment Benefit
- ☐ Sickness Benefit
- ☐ Domestic Purposes Benefit
- ☐ Invalid's Benefit
- ☐ Student Allowance
- ☐ other government benefits, government income support payments, war pensions, or paid parental leave
- ☐ other sources of income, counting support payments from people who do not live in my household

- ☐ no source of income during that time
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

---

**7. What is your approximate household income before tax, for this year?**

- ☐ loss
- ☐ zero income
- ☐ \$1 – \$5,000
- ☐ \$5,001 – \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,001 – \$15,000
- ☐ \$15,001 – \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,001 – \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,001 – \$30,000
- ☐ \$30,001 – \$35,000
- ☐ \$35,001 – \$40,000
- ☐ \$40,001 – \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,001 – \$60,000
- ☐ \$60,001 – \$70,000
- ☐ \$70,001 – \$100,000
- ☐ \$100,001 – \$150,000
- ☐ \$150,001 – 200,000
- ☐ \$200,001 and above
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

---

**8. How would you describe your political inclination, if any? You can name a political party that represents your political beliefs, or describe your beliefs generally.**

---

**9. How would you describe your religious beliefs, if any?**

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*Thank You*

## **Appendix B. List of Q Set Statements**

- 1\_Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food
- 2\_Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents
- 3\_Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry
- 4\_Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity
- 5\_Society has failed people who use food banks
- 6\_The government should ensure that people do not go hungry
- 7\_Using a food bank is embarrassing, people should not need to use one to be able to eat
- 8\_People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'
- 9\_The rate of food insecurity is concerning
- 10\_Food insecurity increases health costs for the state
- 11\_No child in New Zealand should go hungry
- 12\_The outcomes of food insecurity are a violations of the human right to health
- 13\_Food insecurity increases health costs for families
- 14\_The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers
- 15\_Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity
- 16\_Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity
- 17\_People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices
- 18\_Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living
- 19\_Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes
- 20\_Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels
- 21\_Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies
- 22\_Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school
- 23\_Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government
- 24\_NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries
- 25\_The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices
- 26\_The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour
- 27\_Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis
- 28\_Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year
- 29\_The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance
- 30\_Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity
- 31\_A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make
- 32\_Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change
- 33\_It is natural and right that having sufficient food is accessed through having enough money
- 34\_With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices
- 35\_Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity
- 36\_Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control
- 37\_Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity
- 38\_Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity
- 39\_The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity
- 40\_Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern
- 41\_For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints

42\_ New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest  
43\_ New Zealanders do not realise the true level of food insecurity in this country  
44\_ Food bank operation shows public willingness to help struggling people  
45\_ A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues  
46\_ The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people  
47\_ The poor lack choices in stress relief/treats & are criticised for using the options available  
48\_ Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live  
49\_ Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it  
50\_ Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity  
51\_ The government should ensure that no child goes hungry  
52\_ The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter  
53\_ Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity  
54\_ Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty  
55\_ Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched  
56\_ Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state  
57\_ Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living  
58\_ People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support  
59\_ Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity  
60\_ Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity  
61\_ The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high  
62\_ Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system  
63\_ The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand  
64\_ Food banks should be supported by local or national government  
65\_ The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive  
66\_ The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food  
67\_ Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults  
68\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems  
69\_ Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity  
70\_ Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity  
71\_ Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs  
72\_ Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need  
73\_ Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending  
74\_ Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity  
75\_ Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity  
76\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs  
77\_ Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity  
78\_ Being employed is not a guarantee of food security



## Appendix C. Q Set with Factor Rankings

#	Statement	F1	F2	F3
1	Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food	-3	-4	-2
2	Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents	-4	-3	0
3	Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry	4	5	4
4	Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity	-1	0	1
5	Society has failed people who use food banks	-2	-3	-3
6	The government should ensure that people do not go hungry	2	-1	4
7	Using a food bank is embarrassing, people should not need to use one to be able to eat	0	-1	-1
8	People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'	4	4	1
9	The rate of food insecurity is concerning	3	4	2
10	Food insecurity increases health costs for the state	4	1	3
11	No child in New Zealand should go hungry	5	3	5
12	The outcomes of food insecurity are a violations of the human right to health	2	2	-1
13	Food insecurity increases health costs for families	3	0	4
14	The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers	0	-2	3
15	Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity	1	0	3
16	Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity	1	1	-1
17	People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices	-4	-2	-5
18	Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living	-4	-5	-3
19	Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes	-3	-3	-3
20	Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels	-1	0	-5
21	Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies	-2	0	-3
22	Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school	-2	-2	1
23	Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government	3	2	0
24	NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries	-2	2	2
25	The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices	-5	-4	-5
26	The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour	-5	-5	-4
27	Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis	-3	-3	-1
28	Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year	-3	-3	-3
29	The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance	-1	-2	3
30	Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity	5	5	0

#	Statement	F1	F2	F3
31	A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make	3	2	4
32	Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change	2	3	1
33	It is natural and right that having sufficient food is accessed through having enough money	0	0	-2
34	With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices	-2	0	0
35	Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity	0	1	2
36	Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control	1	1	3
37	Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity	-3	-1	-2
38	Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity	-1	-1	-1
39	The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity	-2	-1	-3
40	Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern	-1	-1	-4
41	For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints	3	3	2
42	New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest	2	4	-3
43	New Zealanders do not realise the true level of food insecurity in this country	3	3	1
44	Food bank operation shows public willingness to help struggling people	1	1	1
45	A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues	2	4	0
46	The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people	4	1	5
47	The poor lack choices in stress relief/treats & are criticised for using the options available	-1	-2	0
48	Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live	-5	-4	-2
49	Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it	2	0	2
50	Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity	0	-1	1
51	The government should ensure that no child goes hungry	3	0	4
52	The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter	5	4	2
53	Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity	0	2	0
54	Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty	2	4	3
55	Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched	1	3	-2
56	Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state	-2	-2	-4

#	Statement	F1	F2	F3
57	Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living	1	2	-1
58	People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support	1	2	2
59	Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity	1	-2	2
60	Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity	-1	-2	1
61	The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high	0	1	-2
62	Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system	0	2	-2
63	The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand	-3	-4	-1
64	Food banks should be supported by local or national government	0	2	-1
65	The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive	4	1	-1
66	The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food	-4	-3	-4
67	Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults	1	-1	5
68	A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems	-1	-1	-1
69	Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity	-2	-3	1
70	Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity	-1	3	-4
71	Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs	2	3	0
72	Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need	-4	-5	-2
73	Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending	-3	-4	2
74	Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity	-2	-2	0
75	Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity	0	1	0
76	A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs	2	1	1
77	Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity	-1	0	-2
78	Being employed is not a guarantee of food security	1	-1	2

## Appendix D. Factor 1 Ranking of Statements

+5

11\_ No child in New Zealand should go hungry

3\_ Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry

8\_ People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'

+4

30\_ Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity

52\_ The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter

41\_ For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints

9\_ The rate of food insecurity is concerning

46\_ The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people

+3

10\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for the state

45\_ A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues

65\_ The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive

23\_ Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government

31\_ A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make

42\_ New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest

43\_ New Zealanders do not realise the true level of food insecurity in this country

+2

12\_ The outcomes of food insecurity are a violation of the human right to health

71\_ Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs

51\_ The government should ensure that no child goes hungry

13\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for families

54\_ Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty

32\_ Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change

76\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs

49\_ Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it

6\_ The government should ensure that people do not go hungry

+1

58\_ People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support

64\_ Food banks should be supported by local or national government

62\_ Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system

36\_ Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control

57\_ Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living

16\_ Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity

44\_ Food bank operation shows public willingness to help struggling people

55\_ Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched

15\_ Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity

78\_ Being employed is not a guarantee of food security

0

59\_Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity

35\_Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity

33\_It is natural and right that having sufficient food is accessed through having enough money

75\_Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity

61\_The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high

67\_Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults

7\_Using a food bank is embarrassing, people should not need to use one to be able to eat

53\_Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity

50\_Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity

70\_Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity

-1

34\_With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices

77\_Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity

14\_The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers

20\_Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels

68\_A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems

29\_The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance

60\_Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity

21\_Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies

4\_Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity

47\_The poor lack choices in stress relief/treats & are criticised for using the options available

-2

24\_NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries

38\_Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity

39\_The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity

40\_Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern

56\_Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state

5\_Society has failed people who use food banks

22\_Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school

74\_Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity

27\_Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis

-3

69\_Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity

63\_The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand

73\_Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending

37\_Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity

17\_People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices

1\_Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food

28\_Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year

-4

19\_Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes

2\_Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents

66\_The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food

18\_Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living

72\_Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need

-5

48\_Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live

25\_The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices

26\_The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour

## Appendix E. Factor 2 Ranking of Statements

+5

11\_ No child in New Zealand should go hungry

46\_ The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people

10\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for the state

+4

52\_ The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter

13\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for families

67\_ Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults

3\_ Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry

51\_ The government should ensure that no child goes hungry

+3

31\_ A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make 65\_ The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive

8\_ People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'

6\_ The government should ensure that people do not go hungry

43\_ New Zealanders do not realise the true level of food insecurity in this country

41\_ For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints

54\_ Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty

+2

30\_ Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity

15\_ Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity

9\_ The rate of food insecurity is concerning

78\_ Being employed is not a guarantee of food security

12\_ The outcomes of food insecurity are a violation of the human right to health

59\_ Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity

14\_ The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers

44\_ Food bank operation shows public willingness to help struggling people

58\_ People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support

+1

57\_ Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living

29\_ The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance

76\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs

49\_ Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it

50\_ Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity

32\_ Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change

4\_ Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity

35\_ Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity

23\_ Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government

45\_ A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues

0

36\_ Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control  
60\_ Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity  
7\_ Using a food bank is embarrassing, people should not need to use one to be able to eat  
71\_ Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs  
47\_ The poor lack choices in stress relief/treats & are criticised for using the options available  
73\_ Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending  
55\_ Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched  
61\_ The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high  
75\_ Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity  
16\_ Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity

-1

42\_ New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest  
33\_ It is natural and right that having sufficient food is accessed through having enough money  
62\_ Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system  
69\_ Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity 68\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems  
22\_ Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school  
64\_ Food banks should be supported by local or national government  
53\_ Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity  
38\_ Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity  
40\_ Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern

-2

74\_ Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity  
20\_ Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels  
63\_ The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand  
77\_ Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity  
39\_ The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity  
34\_ With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices  
21\_ Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies  
19\_ Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes  
24\_ NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries

-3

70\_ Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity  
27\_ Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis  
5\_ Society has failed people who use food banks  
56\_ Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state

1\_ Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food  
37\_ Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity  
28\_ Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year

-4

18\_ Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living



72\_ Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need

2\_ Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents

48\_ Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live

17\_ People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices

-5

66\_ The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food

25\_ The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices

26\_ The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour

## Appendix F. Factor 3 Ranking of Statements

+5

3\_ Nobody in New Zealand should go hungry

11\_ No child in New Zealand should go hungry

46\_ The reasons for food insecurity vary widely between people

+4

6\_ The government should ensure that people do not go hungry

24\_ NZ is better equipped to reduce food insecurity than other developed countries

31\_ A household's economic situation can constrain the food choices they can make

51\_ The government should ensure that no child goes hungry

73\_ Individual generosity is a better solution to food insecurity than government spending

+3

13\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for families

15\_ Mental health issues contribute to food insecurity

29\_ The efficacy of skills to budget, shop and cook are constrained by personal circumstance

34\_ With lesser financial constraints, people take the opportunity to make better choices

36\_ Most people become food insecure due to circumstances beyond their control

54\_ Lack of hope, options or prospects corrodes peoples' ability to escape poverty

67\_ Children deserve more help to be food secure than adults

+2

22\_ Parents ought to be enabled to provide for children, not have them fed at school

2\_ Free food in schools problematically removes responsibility from parents

35\_ Food education in schools can help to address food insecurity

50\_ Lack of mobility/transport contributes to food insecurity

58\_ People struggling on a low income are best helped by education & adequate financial support

59\_ Promoting affordable housing is important to reduce food insecurity

10\_ Food insecurity increases health costs for the state

69\_ Increasing educational opportunities for women would reduce food insecurity

74\_ Efforts to improve parenting skills would reduce food insecurity

+1

4\_ Corporate donations of food to schools are a good way to reduce food insecurity

41\_ For many people, nutritional options are limited by financial constraints

44\_ Food bank operation shows public willingness to help struggling people

47\_ The poor lack choices in stress relief/treats & are criticised for using the options available

14\_ The impact of food insecurity on public health is a concern for policy makers

60\_ Global and national economic problems increase food insecurity

68\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be regulatory changes to tackle social problems

75\_ Budgeting courses are an effective way to decrease household food insecurity

76\_ A priority in reducing food insecurity should be benefit levels adequate to provide people's basic needs

78\_ Being employed is not a guarantee of food security

0

9\_The rate of food insecurity is concerning

27\_Food insecurity is usually caused by an unexpected household crisis

45\_A whole of government response is required to address food insecurity, tackling economic & social issues

48\_Beneficiaries should be accountable to tax-payers for the way they live

49\_Public misconceptions about drivers of food insecurity are a barrier to addressing it

52\_The welfare state should ensure that all people have basic food, clothing & shelter

53\_Insufficient welfare payments contribute to food insecurity

63\_The institutionalisation of charity (as in USA) should be avoided in New Zealand

8\_People have a 'right to food', comparable to their 'right to free speech'

32\_Growing up in poverty establishes poor dietary habits which are difficult to change

-1

37\_Irrational food choices contribute to food insecurity

1\_Policy makers are properly concerned about the human right to food

38\_Food banks are an effective way of addressing food insecurity

62\_Food insecurity is a structural effect of low incomes and a corporate food system

16\_Structural unemployment and low incomes consign a portion of the population to food insecurity

23\_Effectively reducing food insecurity is a moral necessity of government

71\_Food banks are covering holes in the welfare state made by spending cut-backs

72\_Charities, not the state, should have ultimate responsibility for those in need

43\_New Zealanders do not realise the true level of food insecurity in this country

77\_Free food in schools could effectively address child food insecurity

-2

30\_Poverty is the primary, underlying cause of food insecurity

28\_Free food in schools is ineffective because children attend for less than half of a year

64\_Food banks should be supported by local or national government

65\_The welfare state ought to allow people to thrive, not merely survive

19\_Children go hungry because their parent(s) have made mistakes

7\_Using a food bank is embarrassing, people should not need to use one to be able to eat

18\_Beneficiaries receive enough money to cover their costs of living

33\_It is natural and right that having sufficient food is accessed through having enough money

12\_The outcomes of food insecurity are a violation of the human right to health

-3

57\_Low & minimum wages are not keeping up with rises in the cost of living

66\_The state should not be expected to ensure that everybody has enough food

39\_The government is unwilling to examine or publically discuss food insecurity 21\_Food insecurity is not addressed by government policies

26\_The best way to help people struggling on a low income is to penalise poor behaviour

5\_Society has failed people who use food banks

61\_The cost of food in New Zealand is problematically high

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55\_Without external support, intergenerational poverty is entrenched

25\_ The best way to help people struggling on a benefit is to restrict their choices  
70\_ Currently, food banks are the most effective response to food insecurity  
56\_ Food bank operation lets government off the hook, providing a 'last resort' below the welfare state  
42\_ New Zealand society is relying more and more on charity to care for the poorest  
-5  
20\_ Some people have a sense of entitlement to free food parcels  
17\_ People can avoid food insecurity if they don't make bad choices  
40\_ Policies to address food insecurity are not a political priority as it lacks voter concern